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THE

HEIDENMAUER;

OR THE BENEDICTINES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE PILOT," "THE BRAVO," &c.

"From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy,
Have I not seen what human things could do?"
BYRON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE HEIDENMAUER.

CHAPTER X.

"The way is but short; away—"
Armado.

WHILE all must be conscious of the fearful infirmities that beset human nature, there are none so base as not to know that their being contains the seeds of that godlike principle which still likens them to their divine Creator. Virtue commands the respect of man, in whatever accidental stage of civilization, or of mental improvement, he may happen to exist; and he who practises its precepts is certain of the

respect, though he may not always secure the protection, of his contemporaries.

As the Count of Leiningen walked down the rich and vast aisle of the abbey-church, his thoughts vacillated between the impressions produced by the Prior, and his latent, but still predominant, intentions. He might have been likened to one who listened to the councils of a good and of an evil genius; that exhorting to forbearance and mercy, and this tempting to violence by the usual array of flattery and hopes. While he brooded over the exactions of the community, which were founded on a legal superiority that was alike hurtful to his power and galling to his pride, its manner of thwarting his views, and its constant opposition to his supremacy in the valley, motives of enmity that were justly heightened by the dissolute and audacious deportment of too many of its members, the effect of all was secretly opposed by the image of Father Arnolph, surrounded by the mild and noble characteristics of christian

virtue. Emich could not, though he fain would, chase from his imagination the impression of meekness, charity, and of self-denial, that a long acquaintance with the monk had made, and which the recent interview had served both to freshen and to render more deep. But a spectacle was prepared to meet his eyes in the court of the convent, that did as much towards weakening this happy influence of the Prior, by setting the pride of the noble in opposition to his better feelings, as could have been wished by the bitterest enemy of Limburg.

It has been said that the outer wall of the abbey encircled the entire brow of the hill, or mountain, on which the convent stood. Though the buildings were spacious and numerous, the size of the little plain on the summit left ample space for exercise and air. Besides the cloisters, which were vast, though possessing the character of monkish seclusion, there were gardens in the rear of the Abbot's abode, and a court of considerable extent, immediately in

front of the church. Athwart this court, in which sundry groups of the late congregation yet lingered, was drawn up, in military order, a band of soldiers, wearing the colours, and acknowledging the authority, of the Elector Friedrich. The secret signal given by Father Bonifacius, when the Count entered the choir, had prepared this unwelcome sight for his neighbour.

While the men-at-arms leaned on their arquebuses, in grave attention to discipline, the Knight of Rhodes and the Abbé were occupied in paying their court to the fair wife of the Burgomaster of Duerckheim, and to her scarce fairer daughter. Young Berchthold stood aloof, watching the interview with feelings allied equally to envy and jealousy.

"A fair morning and a comfortable mass to you, highborn Emich!" cried the husband and father heartily, but lifting his cap, as the noble approached the spot where the burgher stood, waiting for this meeting ere he put foot into the

stirrup; "I had thought the sight of your father's altar was like to cheat me of this honour, and to send me away without a word from your friendly and much-prized grace."

"Between thee and me, Heinrich, this slight could not happen," answered the Count, grasping the hand of the Bourgomaster, which he squeezed with the cordiality and vigour of a soldier. "How fareth it with all in Duerckheim, that town of my affection, not to say of my right?"

"As you could wish, noble Count, and well-disposed to the house of Leiningen. In all that pertaineth to love of your name and race, we lack nothing."

"This is well, honest Heinrich; it may yet be better — but thou wilt do me grace this summer morning?"

"Nay, it is for your grace to command in this particular, and for one like me to obey."

"Herr Heinrich, hast looked well at these knaves of Freidrich? Ha!—are they not me-

lancholy and ill-disposed at being cooped with Benedictines, when there are stirring times in the Palatinate, and when their master hath as much as he can do to hold his court in Heidelberg! Seest thou aught of this?"

Emich had dropped his voice, and the burgher was not a man to express more in answer than the circumstances actually required. He looked eloquently, however, and the exchange of glances between him and the Count, betrayed the nature of the understanding that connected the castle and the city.

"You spoke of commanding my duty, mein Herr Graf, and it is fitting I should know in what manner to do you pleasure."

"Nay, 'tis no pain-giving penance I ask. Turn thy horse's head towards Hartenburg, and share of my poor fare, with a loving welcome, for an hour or so."

"I would it were within compass, my Lord Count," returned Heinrich, casting a doubting look towards Meta and his wife—"but these

Sunday masses are matters in which the women love to deal, and from the first sound of the matin bell, till we shut the gates at even, I scarce call myself master of a thought."

"By the Virgin! 't would seem ill indeed, did not Hartenburg contain a roof to shelter all of thy name and love."

"There are noble gentlemen already on your hospitality, and I would not fain—"

"Name them not. This, in the gay doublet, that weareth the white cross, is but a houseless Knight of Rhodes; one that wandereth like the dove from the ark, uncertain where to place his foot; and he of black vestments, an idle Abbé from among the French, who doth little else but prate with the women. Leave thy female gender in their hands, for they are much accustomed to these gallantries."

"Zum Henker! most nobly born eccellenz, I never doubted their handiness in all idlenesses; but my wife hath little humour for vain attentions of this nature, and not to con-

ceal from my lord any of our humours, I will confess it is as little to my pleasure to witness so much ceremony with a woman. Were the well-born Ermengarde, your noble consort, in the castle, my female charge might be glad to pay their court to her, but in her absence, I doubt that they will cause more incumbrance than they will afford satisfaction."

"Name it not, honest Heinrich, but leave the matter to me. As for these idlers, I will find them occupation, when fairly out of the saddle; so will I not excuse the youngest of thy name."

The warm, frank manner of the noble prevailed, though the arrangement was not altogether agreeable to the Burgomaster; but in that age hospitality was always of so direct a character as seldom to admit denial without sufficient excuse. Emich now paid his court to the females. Smoothing his moustache and beard, he saluted the cheeks of Ulrike with affectionate freedom, and then, presuming on

his years and rank, he pressed a kiss on the ruby lips of Meta. The girl blushed and laughed, and in her confusion curtesied, as if in acknowledgment of the grace from one of so high quality. Heinrich himself, though he so little liked the coquetry of the strangers, witnessed these liberties not only without alarm but with evident contentment.

"Many thanks, noble Emich, for this honour to my women," he cried, lifting his bonnet again. "Meta is not used to these compliments, and she scarce knoweth rightly how to acknowledge the grace, for, to say truth, it is not often that her cheek feeleth the tickling of a beard. I am no saluter of her sex, and there are none in Duerckheim that may so presume."

"St. Denis defend me!" exclaimed the Abbé; "in what shameful negligence have we fallen!" saluting the mild Ulrike on the instant, and repeating the same ceremony with the daughter, so suddenly, as to leave none present time to recover from their surprise.

"Sir Knight of Rhodes, we appear in this affair as but of indifferent breeding!"

"Hold, cousin of Veiderbach," said Emich, laughing, while he placed a hand before his kinsman—"we forget all this time that we are in the court of Limburg, and that salutations which savour so much of earth may scandalize the holy Benedictines. We will to horse, and keep our gallantries for a better season."

The forward, impatient movement of young Berchthold was self-checked, and, swallowing his discontent, he turned aside to conceal his vexation.

In the mean time, the whole party prepared to mount. Although repulsed in his effort to obtain a salute from the fair girl, who had so passively received these liberties from his kinsman and the Abbé, the Knight of Rhodes busied himself in assisting the damsel upon the crupper of her father's saddle. A similar office was performed for Ulrike by the Count of Leiningen himself, and then the noble threw

his own booted and heavy leg across the large and strong-jointed war-horse that was pawing the pavement of the court. The others imitated his example, even to the mounted servitors, who were numerous, when, doing stately reverence to the large crucifix that stood before them, the whole cavalcade ambled from the court.

There were many curious spectators around the outer gate, among whom were sundry of the more humble dependants of Hartenburg, purposely collected there, by an order of their lord, in the event of any sudden violence arising from his visit to the abbey, together with a crowd of mendicants.

"Alms, great Emich!—Alms, worthy and wealthy Burgomaster! God's blessing on ye both, and holy St. Benedict heed ye in his prayers! We are a-hungered and a-cold, and we crave alms at your honourable hands!"

"Give the rogues a silver pence," said the Count to the purse-bearer, who rode in his train

—"They have a starving look, in sooth. These godly Benedictines have, of late, been so busied between their garrison and their masses, that they have forgotten to feed their poor.—Come nearer, friend; art of the Jaegerthal?"

"No, noble Count. I come from a pilgrimage to a distant shrine, but want and suffering have befallen me by the way."

"Hast pressed the monks for charity?—or dost thou find them too much engaged in godliness to remember human suffering?"

"Great Count, they give freely; but where there are many mouths to feed, there needs be much gold. I say naught against the holy community of Limburg, which is godly in charity, as in grace."

"Give the knave a kreutzer;" growled Emich, spurring his steed in a manner to cause the gravel to scatter beneath his hoofs.

"Harkee, fellow," observed Heinrich Frey; "hast thou aught to show in the way of authority for undertaking this pilgrimage, and for

assailing the Elector's subjects and servitors in a public horse-path ?"

"Naught but this, illustrious Burgomaster," —Heinrich wore his chain of office—"naught but the commands of my confessor, and this pass of our own chief men."

"Callest this naught ? Thou speakest of a legal instrument of high quality, an' it were but a copy of silly rhymes! Hold!— thou must not be led into temptation by too much want. Meta, wench, hast a kreutzer ?"

"Here is a silver pence, that may better suit the pilgrim's necessities, father."

"God keep thee, child! Dost expect to escape want thyself, with such prodigality ? But stay—there are many of them, and the piece justly distributed might do good. Come nearer, friends. Here is a silver zwanziger, which you will divide honestly into twenty parts, of which two are for the stranger, for to him are we most indebted by the commands of God, and one for each inhabitant of the valley,

not forgetting the poor woman that, in your haste, and by reason of her years, you have prevented from drawing near. For this boon, I ask prayers of you in behalf of the Elector, the city of Duerckheim, and the family of Frey."

So saying, the Burgomaster pushed ahead, and was soon at the foot of the mountain of Limburg. The train of footmen, who had lingered to witness the largesse of the magistrate, and who had considered the indifference of Emich as what was no more than natural in one placed by Providence in a situation so far removed from vulgar wants, was about to follow, when a lay-brother of the convent touched one of the party on the arm, signing for him to re-enter the court.

"Thou art needed further, friend," whispered the lay-brother. "Amuse thyself with these men-at-arms till they retire, then seek the cloisters."

A nod sufficed to tell the lay-brother that he

was understood, and he immediately disappeared. The follower of Count Emich did as commanded, loitering in the court until the object of the Abbot was accomplished, that of exhibiting the protection of the Elector to his dangerous neighbour, and the arquebusiers marched to their quarters. The road was no sooner clear, than the peasant who had been detained proceeded to do as he had been ordered.

In each conventual edifice of the other hemisphere, there is an inner court surrounded by low and contemplative arcades, called the cloisters. The term, which is given to the seclusion of monastic life in general, and to the objects of the institution itself, in an architectural sense, is limited to the secluded and sombre piazzas just mentioned. When this part of the building is decorated, as often happens, with the elaborate ornaments of the gothic style, it is not easy to conceive a situation more happily imagined for the purposes of reflection, self-exami-

nation, and religious calm. To us the cloisters have ever appeared pregnant with the poetry of monkish existence, and, protestant as we are, we never yet entered one without feeling the influence of that holy and omnipotent power that is thought to be propriated by conventual seclusion. In Italy, the land of vivid thought and of glorious realities, the pencils of the greatest masters have been put in requisition to give the cloisters a mild attraction, blended with lessons of instruction, that are in strict consonance with their uses. Here are found some of the finest remains of Raphael, of Domenichino, and of Andrea del Sarto, and the traveller now enters vaulted galleries, that the monk so long paced in religious hope, or learned abstraction, to visit the most prized relics of art.

The dependant of Count Emich had no difficulty in finding his way to the place in question, for, as usual, there was a direct communication between the cloisters of Limburg and the church. By entering the latter, and taking a

lateral door, which was known to lead to the sacristy, he found himself beneath the arcades, in the midst of the touching seclusion described. Against the walls were tablets with Latin inscriptions, in honour of different brothers who had been distinguished by piety and knowledge, and here and there was visible, in ivory or stone, that constant monitor of catholic worship, the crucifix.

The stranger paused, for a single monk paced the arcades, and his mien was not inviting for one who doubted of his reception. At least so thought the dependant of Emich, who might easily have mistaken the chastened expression of Father Arnolph's features, clouded as they now were with care, for severity.

"What wouldst thou?" demanded the Prior, when a turn brought him face to face with the intruder.

"Reverend monk, thy much-prized blessing."

"Kneel, and receive it, son. Thou art doubly blest, in seeking consolation from the

Church, and in avoiding the fatal heresies of the times."

The Prior repeated the benediction, made the usual sign of grace, and motioned for the other to rise.

"Wouldst thou aught else?" he asked, observing that the peasant did not retire, as was usual for those who received this favour.

"Naught—unless yonder brother hath occasion for me."

The face of Siegfried was thrust through a door which led to the cells. The countenance of the Prior changed like that of one who had lost all confidence in the intentions of his companion, and he pursued his way along the arcade. The other glided past, and disappeared by the door through which he had been covertly invited to enter.

It has already been said that the Benedictine is an order of hospitality. A principal building of the hill was especially devoted to the com-

forts of the Abbot, and to those of the travellers it was always his duty, and in the case of Father Bonifacius scarcely less often his pleasure, to entertain. Here were seen some signs of the great wealth of the monastery, though it was wealth chastened by forms, and restricted by opinion; still there was little of self-denial, or indeed of any of that self-mortification which is commonly thought to be the inseparable attendant of the cell. The rooms were wainscotted with dark oak; emblems of religious faith, in costly materials, abounded; nor was there any want of velvet and other stuffs, all however of sober colours, though of intrinsic value. Father Siegfried ushered the peasant into one of the most comfortable of these rooms. It was the cabinet of the Abbot, who, having thrown aside the robes of office in which he had so lately appeared in the choir, and ungirt and divested of all the churchly pomp in which he had just shown himself to the people, was now

taking his ease, with the indolence of a student, and with some of the negligence of a debauchee.

"Here is the youth I have named to you, holy Abbot," said Father Siegfried, motioning his companion to advance.

Bonifacius laid down a parchment-covered and illuminated volume, one but lately issued from the press, rubbing his eyes like a man suddenly aroused from a dreamy abstraction.

"Truly, brother Siegfried, these knaves of Leipzig have done wonders with their art! Not a word can I find astray, or a thought concealed. God knows to what pass of information this excess of knowledge, so long sacred to the learned, may yet lead us! The office of a librarian will no longer be of rare advantages, or scarcely of repute."

"Have we not proofs of the evil, in the growing infidelity, and in the manifest insubordination of the times?"

"It were better for all their souls, and their present repose, that fewer did the thinking in this troublesome world — Thou art named Johan, son?"

"Gottlob, most reverend Abbot, by your leave, and with the Church's favour."

"'Tis a pious appellation, and I trust thou dost not forget to obey the duty of which it should hourly remind thee."

"In that particular I can say that I praise God, father, for all the benefits I receive, and were they double what they are, I feel that within me which says I could go on rendering thanks for ever, for gracious gifts."

The answer of Gottlob caused the Abbot to turn his head. After studying the demure expression of the young man's face intently, he continued—

"This is well; thou art a huntsman in Count Emich's household?"

"His cow-herd, holy Abbot, and a huntsman

in the bargain; for a more scampering, self-losing, trouble-giving family is not to be found in the Palatinate, than this of mine!"

"I remember it was a cow-herd; thou dealt a little lightly with my brother Siegfried here, in pretending thou wert of Duerckheim, and not of the castle."

"To speak fairly to your reverence, there was some business between us, for be it known to you, holy Abbot, a cow-herd is made to suffer for all the frolics of his beasts, and so I preferred to do penance simply for my own backslidings, without white-washing the consciences of all Lord Emich's cattle in the bargain."

The Abbot turned again, and this time his look was still longer and more scrutinizing than before.

"Hast thou heard of Luther?"

"Does your reverence mean the drunken cobbler of Duerckheim."

"I mean the monk of Wittenberg, knave: though, by St. Benedict! thou hast not unaptly

named the rebel; for truly doth he cobble that would fain mend the offices or discipline of Holy Church! I ask if thou hast sullied thy understanding and weakened thy faith, by lending ear to this damnable heresy, that is abroad in our Germany?"

"St. Benedict and the blessed Maria keep your reverence in mind, according to your deserts! What hath a poor cow-herd to do with questions that trouble the souls of the learned, and cause even the peaceably disposed to become quarrelsome and warlike?"

"Thou hast received a schooling above thy fortune—art of the Jaegerthal?"

"Born and nurtured, holy Abbot. We are of long standing in the valley, and few families are better known for skill in rearing beeves, or for dealing cunningly with a herd, than that of which I come, humble and poor as I may seem, to your reverence."

"I doubt but there is as much seeming as reality in this indifferent opinion of thyself.

But thou hast had an explanation with Brother Siegfried, and we count on thy services. Thou knowest the power of the Church, son, and cannot be ignorant of its disposition to deal mercifully with those that do it homage, nor of its displeasure when justly angered. We are disposed to deal in increased kindness with those who do not stray from the fold, at this moment, when the Devils are abroad scattering the ignorant and helpless."

"Notwithstanding all you have said, most reverend Abbot, concerning the trifle I have gleaned in the way of education, I am too little taught to understand aught but plain speech. In the matter of a bargain it might be well to name the conditions clearly, lest a poor, but well-meaning, youth should happen to be damned, simply because he hath little knowledge of Latin, or cannot clearly understand what hath not been clearly said."

"I have no other meaning than that thy pious conduct will be remembered at the altar

and the confessional; and that indulgences, and other lenities, will not be forgotten when there is question of thee."

"This is excellent, holy Abbot, for those that may profit by it—but, Saint Benedict help us! of what account would it all be, were Lord Emich to threaten his people with the dungeon and stripes, should any dare to frequent the altars of Limburg, or otherwise to have dealings with the reverend brotherhood?"

"Dost think our prayers, or our authority, cannot penetrate the walls of Hartenburg?"

"Of that, most powerful Bonifacius, I say nothing, since I never have yet profited in the way you mean. The dungeon of Hartenburg and I are not strangers to each other; and, were I to speak my most intimate thoughts, it would be to say, that Saint Benedict himself would find it no easy matter to open its doors, or to soften its pavements, so long as the Count was in an angry humour. Potz Tausend, holy Abbot! it is well to speak of miracles and of

indulgences; but let him who imagines that either is about to make that damp and soul-chilling hole warm and pleasant, pass a night within its walls in November! He may enter with as much faith in the abbey prayers as he will; but if he do not come forth with great dread of Lord Emich's displeasure, why he is not flesh and blood, but a burning kiln in the form of mortality!"

Father Bonifacius saw that it was useless endeavouring to influence the mind of the cow-herd in the vulgar manner, and he had recourse to surer means. Motioning his companion to hand him a little casket, externally decorated with many of the visible signs of the Christian faith, he took out of it a purse, that wanted for neither size nor weight. The eyes of Gott-lob glistened—had not the monks been much occupied in examining the gold, they might have suspected that the pleasure he betrayed was a little affected—and he manifested a strong

disposition to know the contents of a bag that had so many outward signs of value.

"This will make peace and create faith between us," said the Abbot, handing a golden mark to Gottlob. "Here is that which the dullest comprehension can understand; and whose merits, I doubt not, will be sufficiently clear to one of thy ready wit."

"Your reverence does not overvalue my means," answered the cow-herd, who pocketed the piece without further ceremony. "Were our good Mother of the Church to take this method of securing friends, she might laugh at all the Luthers between the Lake of Constance and the ocean, him of Wittenberg among the number: but, by some strange oversight, she has of late done more towards taking away the people's gold, than towards bestowing! I am rejoiced to find that the mistake is at last discovered; and chiefly am I glad, that one, poor and unworthy as I, has been among the first

that she is pleased to make an instrument of her new intentions!"

The Abbot appeared at a loss to understand the character of his agent; but, being a worldly and selfish man himself, he counted rather loosely on the influence of a mediator whose potency is tacitly admitted by all of mercenary propensities. He resumed his seat, therefore, like one who saw little necessity for farther concealment, and went directly to the true object of the interview.

"Thou hast something to communicate from the Castle of Hartenburg, good Gottlob?"

"If it be your reverence's pleasure to listen."

"Proceed — Canst tell aught of the force Emich hath gathered in the hold?"

"Mein Herr Abbot, it is no easy matter to count varlets that go staggering about, from the moment the sun touches your abbey towers, to that in which he sets behind the Teufelstein."

"Hast thou not means of separating them in divisions, and of making the enumerations of each apart?"

"Holy Abbot, that experiment hath failed. I divided them into the drunk and the sober; but, for the life of me, I could never get them all to be long enough of the same mind, to hunt up those that were in garrets and cellars; for while this slept off his debauch, that swallowed cup after cup, in a manner to recruit the drunkards as fast as they lost. It were far easier to know the Emperor's policy, than to count Lord Emich's followers!"

"Still they are many."

"They are and they are not, as one happens to view soldiership. In the way of draining a butt, Duke Friedrich would find them a powerful corps, even in an attack against his Heidelberg tun; and yet I doubt whether he would think them of much account in the pressing warfare he wageth."

"Go to—thou art too indirect in thy answers

for the duty thou hast undertaken. Return the gold, if thou refusest the service."

"I pray thee, reverend Abbot, to remember the risks I have already run in this desperate undertaking, and to consider that the trifle you have so munificently bestowed, is already more than earned by the danger of my ears, to say nothing of great loss of reputation, and some pricking of conscience."

"This clown hath tampered with thee, Father Siegfried," said the Abbot, in a tone of reproach to the attending monk: "he even dares to make light of our presence and office!"

"We have the means of recalling him to his respect, as well as to a remembrance of his engagements."

"Thou sayest true: let the remedies be applied—but hold!"

During this brief colloquy between the Benedictines, Father Siegfried had touched a cord, and a lay-brother, of vigorous frame, showed himself. At a signal from the monk, he laid a

hand on an arm of the unresisting Gottlob, and was about to lead him from the room, when the last words of the Abbot, and another signal from Father Siegfried, caused him to pause.

Bonifacius leaned a cheek on his hand, and mused long on the policy of the step he was about to take. The relations between the abbey and the castle, to adopt diplomatic language, were precisely in that awkward state in which it was almost as hazardous to recede as to advance. To imprison a vassal of the Count of Hartenburg, might bring matters to an immediate issue; and yet, to permit him to quit the convent, was to deprive the brotherhood of the means of extracting the information it was so important to obtain, and to procure which had been the principal inducement of attending the debauch already described, at a moment when there was so little real amity between the revellers. The precaution of Emich had frustrated this well-laid scheme, and the result of the experiment had been too costly to admit of

repetition. There was also hazard in permitting Gottlob to return to Hartenburg, for the expectations and hostile spirit of the abbey had been so unadvisedly exposed to the hind, as to render it certain he would relate what had occurred. It was desirable, too, to maintain an appearance of confidence, although so little was felt; for the monk well knew, that next to friendship, its apparent existence was of account in preventing the usual expedients of open hostility. Agents were at Heidelburg, pressing the Elector on a point of the last concern to the welfare of the brotherhood; and it was particularly material that Emich should not be driven to any overt act before the result of this mission was known. In short, these two little powers were in a condition similar to that in which some greater communities have been known to exist, instinctively alive to the opposing character of their respective interests, and yet tampering with the denouement, because neither was yet prepared to proclaim all it

wished, meditated, and hoped to be able to attain. In the mean time, there was an ostensible courtesy between the belligerent parties, occasionally obscured by bursts of natural feeling, which, in politics, the world calls bonhomie, but which would, perhaps, be better termed by the frank designation of artifice.

The Abbot was so much accustomed to this sort of politic reflection, that all these considerations passed before his mind in less time than we have consumed in enumerating them. Still the pause was salutary; for, when he resumed the discourse, he spoke like one whose decision was supported by thought.

"Thou wilt tarry with us a little, Gottlob, for the good of thy soul," he said, making a sign that was understood by his inferiors.

"A thousand thanks, humane and godly Abbot. Next to the present good of my body, I look with most concern to the future condition of my poor soul; and there is great comfort and consolation in your gracious words.

It is but the soul of a poor man; but, being my all, in the way of souls, it must needs be taken care of."

"The discipline we meditate will be healthful. Brothers, lead the penitent to his cell."

The singular indifference with which Gottlob heard his doom, might have given the Abbot motive for reflection, had he not been so much occupied by other thoughts. As it was, the hind accompanied the lay brother without resistance, and indeed with the manner of one who appeared to think he was a gainer by this especial notice from the community of Limburg. So natural and easy was the air of Gottlob, as they took the direction of a gloomy corridor, that Father Siegfried began to believe he had employed an agent whose mind, shrewd and peculiar as it seemed at times, was in truth subject to moments of more than usual imbecility and dulness. He placed the cowherd in a cell, pointed to a crucifix, its only article of furniture, and, without deeming it necessary even to secure the door, retired.

CHAPTER XI.

——— "The Lady Valeria is come
To visit you."

Coriolanus.

A SHORT ride brought the cavalcade of Count Emich to the gates of Hartenburg. When all had alighted, and the guests, with the more regular inmates of the castle, were ushered into the hall, the lord of the hold again saluted Ulrike and her daughter. This freedom was the privilege of his rank, and of his character as host; and for its exercise, he once more received the grateful acknowledgments of Heinrich Frey. The females were then committed to

the care of Gisela, the warder's daughter, who, in the absence of its more noble mistress, happened to be the presiding person of her sex in the place.

"Thou art thrice welcome, upright and loyal Heinrich!" exclaimed the Count, heartily, while he led the Burgomaster by the hand into one of the rooms of honour—"None know thy worth, and thy constancy to thy friends, better than the master of this poor castle; and none love thee better."

"Thanks, well-born Emich, and such duty as one of poor birth and breeding can and should pay to a noble so honoured and prized. I am little used to courtesies, beyond those which we burghers give and take in the streets, and may not do myself full justice in the expression of reverence and respect, but I pray you, Herr Count, to take the desire for the performance."

"Wert thou the Emperor's most favoured chamberlain, thy speech could not do thee

more credit. Though Duerckheim be not Madrid, it is a well-respected and courtly city, and none need envy the Roman or the Parisian that dwelleth there. Here is my kinsman of Veiderbach, a knight that Providence hath cast a little loosely upon the world since the down-fall of his Mediterranean island of Rhodes, and who hath travelled far and near, and he swears, daily, thy town hath no parallel for its dimensions."

"Considered as a mountain city of no great magnitude, meine Herren, we do not blush at the aspect of our ancient walls."

"Thou needest not, and thou must have noted that I spoke in reference to its size. Monsieur Latouche is a gentleman that cometh from the capital of King Francis itself; and no later than this morning, he remarked on the neatness, and wealth, and other matters of consideration, that make themselves apparent, even to the stranger, in thy well-governed and prosperous borough."

The Burgomaster acknowledged the compliment by a profound inclination and a gratified eye, for no flattery is so palpable as not to meet a welcome with those who labour for public distinction; and Emich well knew, that the police and order of his city were weak spots in Heinrich Frey's humility.

"Lord Emich scarce does me justice," returned the pliant Abbé, "since I found many other causes of admiration. The deference that is paid to rank in thy populace, and the manner in which the convenience of the honourable is respected, are particularly worthy of commendation."

"The churchman is right, Lord Emich—for, of all the towns in Germany, I do not think it easy to find another in which the poor and base are so well taught to refrain from thrusting their importunities and disadvantages on the gentle, as in our Duerckheim. I think my lord the Count must have observed the strict

severity and cautious justice of our rules in this particular?"

"None know them better, nor does any heed them more. I cannot recall the moment, cousin Albrecht, when any unpleasant intrusion on my privileges hath ever occurred within its gates. But I keep you from refreshing yourselves, worthy friends. Give us leave a little; —we will seek you again at your own convenience. The Knight and the Abbé took this intimation of the desire of the Count to be alone with the Burgomaster in good part, and withdrew without unnecessary delay. When alone, Emich again took Heinrich Frey by the hand, and led him away into a part of the castle where none presumed to intrude without an especial errand. Here he entered one of those narrow rooms which were devoted to sacred uses, and which was well termed a closet, being in effect but little larger and scarcely better lighted, than the straitened

apartments to which we give the same appellation in these later times.

When fairly protected from observation, and removed beyond the danger of eaves-droppers and spies, the Count threw aside his cloak, unbuckled his sword-belt, and assumed the manner of one at his ease. The Burgomaster took a seat on a stool, in deference to his companion's rank; while the latter, without seeming sensible of the act, seated himself at his side, in the only chair that the closet contained. Whoever has had much intercourse with Asiatics, or with Mussulmans of the southern shore of the Mediterranean, must have frequently observed the silent, significant manner with which they regard each other, when disposed to court or to yield confidence; the eye gradually kindling, and the muscles of the mouth relaxing, until the feeling is fully betrayed in a smile. This is one of the means employed by men who dwell under despotic and dangerous governments, and where the social habits are much

tinctured with violence and treachery, of assuring one another of secret faith and ready support. There is a sort of similar freemasonry in all conditions of life, in which frank and just institutions do not spread their mantle equally over the powerful and the weak, superseding, by the majesty of the law, the necessity of these furtive appeals to the pledges and sympathies of confidents. Such, in some degree, was the nature of the communication with which Emich of Hartenburg now commenced his private intercourse with Heinrich Frey. The Count first laid his square, bony hand on the knee of the Burgomaster, which he squeezed until the iron fingers were nearly buried in the fleshy protuberance. Each turned his head toward his companion, looking askance, as if they mutually understood the meaning of what was conveyed by this silent coquetry. Still, notwithstanding the apparent community of thought and confidence, the countenance and air of each was distinguished

by the personal character and the social station of the individual. The eye of the Baron was both more decided, and more openly meaning, than that of the Burgomaster; while the smile of the latter appeared rather like a faint reflection of the inviting expression of the former, than the effect of any inward impulse.

"Hast heard of last night's success?" abruptly demanded the Count.

"Nothing of the sort hath gladdened me, Herr Count; my heart yearns to know all, if it touches your high interests."

"The mass-singing rogues are stripped of their wine-tribute! of that much are they fairly and legally disburthened! Thou knowest of our long-intended trial of heads; I had intended to have prayed thee to be a second at the banquet, but the presence of these idlers put some restraint on my hospitality. Thou wouldst have proved a staunch second in such an onset, Heinrich!"

"I thank my lord the Count, and shall deem the grace as good as accomplished in the wish. I am not worse than another at board, and may boast of some endurance in the way of liquor; but the seriousness of the times admonish us, of civic authority, to be prudent. There is a wish in the people to be admitted to certain unreasonable and grave privileges, such as the right of vending their wares in the market-place at unseasonable hours, when the convenience of the burgomasters would be much vexed by the concession; and other similar innovations, against which we must make a firm stand, lest they come, in time, to invade our general authority, and cause an unnatural convulsion. Were we to give way to pretensions so extravagant, Herr Count, the town would come to general confusion; and the orderly and respectable city of Duerckheim would justly merit to be compared to the huts of those countries of which they speak in the distant land of America, that hath so much, of

late, given cause to writings and conversation. We need, therefore, look to the example set; for we have busy enemies, who make the most of the smallest indulgences. At another time, I would gladly have drained Heidelberg to your gracious honour."

"Thou wouldst not have been in danger of observation here; and, by the three holy Kings of Koeln, I should know how to tutor any prying knave that might chance to thrust a curious eye within these walls! But thy discretion is worthy of thy prudence, Heinrich; for, with thee, I deem the time serious for all lovers of established order, and of the peace of mankind. What would the knaves, that they thus trouble thy authority? Are they not fed and clad? and do they not now possess privileges out of number? The greedy rogues, if left to their humours, would fain envy their betters each delicate morsel they carry to their mouths, or each drop of generous rhenish that moistens their lips!"

"I fear, well-born Emich, that this spirit of covetousness is in their vile natures! I have rarely consented to any little yielding to their entreaties, such as a wish to swell out the time of their merry-makings, or a desire like this of the market-place, that the taste of the indulgence hath not given a relish for fuller fare. No; he that would govern quietly, and at his own ease, must govern thoroughly; else shall we all become illiterate savages, fitter for the forests of these Indies, than for our present rational and charitable civilization."

"Braver words were never uttered in thy council-hall, and well do I know the head that conceived them! Had there been occasion to have summoned thee hither for the banquet, the excuse should have satisfied, though the vineyards were the forfeiture. But what didst think, friend Heinrich, of the priests to-day, and of their warlike company?"

"'Tis plain Duke Friedrich still upholds them; and to deal frankly with my lord the

Count, the men-at-arms have the air of fellows that are not likely to yield the hill without fair contention."

"Thinkest thou thus, Burgomaster? 'Twere a thousand pities that men of tried mettle should do each other harm, for the benefit and pleasure of a community of shaven Benedictines! What is there to urge in favour of pretensions so audacious as these they prefer, and which are so offensive, both to me, as a noble of the empire, and to all of any note or possessions in Duerckheim?"

"They lay great stress, Herr Count, on the virtue of ancient usages, and on the sacred origin of their mission."

"As much respect as thou wilt for rights that are sealed by time, for such is the stamp that gives value to my own fair claims; and many of thy city privileges come chiefly of use. But the matter between us is of abuse; and I hold it to be unworthy of those who can right

themselves, to submit to wrong. Do the monks still press the town for dues?"

"With offensive importunity. If matters be not quickly stayed, we shall come to open and indecent dissension."

"I would give a winter's enjoyment of my chases were Friedrich more sorely pressed!" exclaimed the Count, laying his hand again on the Burgomaster's knee, whose countenance he studied with a significance that was not lost on his companion. "I speak merely in the manner of his being driven to know his true and fast friends from those who are false."

Heinrich Frey remained silent.

"The Elector is a mild and loving prince, but one sorely ridden by Rome. I fear we shall never have a tranquil neighbourhood, notwithstanding our long forbearance, until the Church is persuaded to limit its authority to its duties."

The eyelids of the Burgomaster lowered, as it might be in reflection.

"And chiefly, Heinrich, am I troubled lest my good and loving Duerckheimers lose this occasion to do themselves right," continued the Count, squeezing the knee he still grasped, until even the compact citizen flinched with the force of the pressure. "What say they in the council-hall touching this matter?"

There was no longer any plausible apology for the silence of the Burgomaster, who did not answer, however, without working the heavy muscles of his face, as if delivered of his opinions with pain.

"Men speak their minds among us, noble-born Count, much as Duke Friedrich prospers or fails in his warfare. When we hear good tidings from the other side of the river, the brotherhood fares but badly in our discourses; but when the Elector's warriors triumph, we hold it prudent to remember they have friends."

"God's truth! Herr Heinrich, it is full time that you come to certain conclusions, else shall we be saddled to the end of our days by these

hard-riding priests. Art thou not wearied with all their greedy exactions, that thou waitest patiently for more?"

"In that particular, a little sufficeth for our humours. There is not a city between Constance and Leyden that is more quickly satisfied with paying than our Duerckheim: but we are husbands and fathers, Herr Count, and men that bear a heavy burthen of authority; and we must be wary, lest in throwing aside one portion of the load, space be found on our shoulders to place another that is heavier. When I would speak of your strong love to the town, there are distrustful tongues too that question me sorely of its fruits, and of your own honourable intentions in our behalf."

"To all of which thou couldst not be wanting of replies. Have I not often entertained thee with my loving wishes in behalf of the citizens?"

"If wishes in our behalf could serve our interests, the townsmen might, in their proper

right, put in a claim to high favour. In the way of longing for our own success, Antwerp itself is not our better."

"Nay, thou takest my meaning unkindly: what Emich of Hartenburg wishes for his friends, he finds means to perform. But we will not trouble digestion, as we are about to feed, with these tiresome details—"

"I pray you, Herr Count, not to doubt my means; little troubles me, when—"

"Thou shalt yield to my humour. What! is not the Count of Leiningen master in his own castle? Not a word more will I hear, till thou hast tasted of my poor hospitality. Did my knaves serve thee, as I commanded yesterday, with the fat buck that fell by my own hand, Heinrich?"

"A thousand thanks! mein Herr, they did, and right cheerfully. I gave the rogues a silver penny for their largesse; and the dust of the Jaegerthal was washed away in heavy draughts of our wine of the plain."

"I would have it so: between friends, there should be no niggardly reserve in the way of courtesies," said Emich, rising. "Dost not bethink thee, Burgomaster, of looking among the youths of Duerckheim for a son to stay thy age? Meta hath reached the years when maidens gladly become wives."

"The wench is not ignorant of her time of life; and the search of a suitable husband hath not failed to give me fatherly concern. I do not presume to compare our conditions and early lives in aught that is disrespectful, mein Herr Graf; but, touching all that is common to great and little, the youth of this day seem not as they were in the time of our young manhood!"

"Priest-ridden, Burgomaster—too much of Rome in our laws and habits. God's my life! when I first mounted steed in the court below, I could have leaped the convent towers did a Benedictine dare gainsay the feat!"

"That would have been a miracle little short

of the raising of their convent walls," answered Heinrich, laughing at his companion's flight, and rising in deference to the attitude the noble had been pleased to take. "These Benedictines have been careless of their advantages, else might they still have kept the circumstance of that miracle as much beyond dispute at this moment, as it was in our young days, Lord Count."

"And what say they in Duerckheim, now, touching the affair?"

"Nay, men treat it at present as they treat other disputable subjects. Since this outcry of Brother Luther, there have appeared many who call in question not only that, but divers others of the abbey's feats."

The Count unconsciously crossed himself, seeming to ponder gloomily on the subject within his own mind. Then glancing towards his companion, he perceived that he was standing.

"I cry thy mercy, worthy Burgomaster; but my inattention hath given thee this pain.

My leg hath been so much of late suspended in the stirrup, that it hath need of straightening; but it should not, in justice, cause thee this inconvenience. I pray thee, Herr Frey, be seated."

"That would ill become my station in your presence, noble and well-born Emich; nor would it do fit credit to my reverence and affection."

"Nay, I will hear none of this. Thy seat, Master Heinrich, and that without delay, lest I seem to overlook thy merits."

"I pray mein Herr Graf not to do himself this wrong; nay, if it be your honourable will —I blush at mine own daring—if I consent, I call my lord to witness 'tis only in profound respect for his will!"

During this struggle of courtesy, the Count succeeded, by means of gentle violence, in forcing the Burgomaster to resume his seat. Heinrich had yielded with a species of maiden coyness; but when he found that, instead of

occupying his own humble stool, he had unwittingly been forced into the arm-chair of the noble, he rebounded from the cushion, as if the leather contained enough of the electric fluid to bid defiance to the nonconductor qualities of the ample woollen garment in which his nether person was cased.

"Gott bewahre!" exclaimed the Burgomaster, in harsh, energetic German: "The empire would cry out against this scandal, were it known! I owe it to my reputation to deny myself an honour so little deserved."

"And I to my authority to enforce my will, and to proclaim thy deserts."

Here the amiable force on the part of the Count, and the courteous coquetry of Heinrich Frey, were resumed, until the latter, fearful of offending by longer resistance, was obliged to submit, protesting, however, to the last, against the apparent presumption on his own part, and against the great injustice which the lord of the hold was doing to his own rights, by thus insisting.

A distinguished foreign orator once pronounced the titles of honour, and the social distinctions that are conferred by the European governments, to be the "cheap defence of nations." This opinion strikes us to be merely one of the thousand bold fallacies that have been broached to uphold existing interests, without reference to their true effects, or to their inherent justice. This "cheap defence," like the immortal Falstaff, who was not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others, is the origin of a hundred sufficiently costly habits, that leave him who bears the burthen but little reason to exult in its discovery. We recommend to all one-eyed economists, who still retain any faith in this well-known opinion of the English orator, to read that letter in the Spectator, in which a city youth relates the manner he is driven to vindicate his own reserve to his fair country cousins, who would fain reproach him with an ungraceful disrespect of his holiday privileges, by reminding them of the calcula-

tions of the individual who refused to indulge in cheese-cakes, because they brought with them so many other unnecessary expenditures.

But whether honours of the description just alluded to, do or do not form any portion of the economy of a nation, there is little question but flattery, like this which Emich has just bestowed on the Burgomaster, is one of the subtle and most powerful agents of the great in effecting their secret purposes. Few are they—alas, how few!—that possess a vision sufficiently clear, and an ambition so truly noble, as to look beyond the narrow and vulgar barriers of human selfishness, and to regard truth as it came from God, without respect for persons and things, except as they are the instruments of his will. It is certain that Heinrich Frey had little pretension to be one of this scrutinizing and elevated class; for when he found himself fairly seated in the chair of the Count of Hartenburg, with the noble himself standing, his sensations were like those which are felt by

the philosopher of the other hemisphere, who is authorised to put a ribbon at his button-hole;—or the tradesman of this, who is elected to the common-council of his native city, after being run on both tickets. Still he greatly regretted there was no one to envy his preferment; for, after the first soothing effect on his own self-love, that unquiet spirit which haunts us to the last, disfiguring the fairest pictures, and casting its alloy into every scheme of happiness, suggested that his triumph would be imperfect without a witness. Just as this rebellious feeling became troublesome, there appeared at the door of the closet, the very being of all others that the Burgomaster would have chosen to see him in the enjoyment of this high honour. A gentle tap announced the presence of the intruder, and when the authoritative voice of Emich had given the permission, the mild Ulrike appeared on the threshold.

Surprise was strongly painted on the features of the Burgomaster's handsome wife.

The husband had crossed his legs, and was indulging in his ease, with a sort of noble indifference to the unusual situation in which he was placed, when this extraordinary sight greeted the eyes of his amazed consort. So absolute and so tenacious were the rules of Germany on all things that concerned the respect due to rank, that even one as little troubled by ambition as the meek Ulrike, had great difficulty in believing her senses, when she beheld Heinrich Frey thus suddenly elevated to a seat of honour in the presence of a Count of Leiningen.

"Nay, enter without fear, my good Ulrike," said Emich, graciously; "thy worthy husband and I do but indulge in mutual friendship, while my varlets prepare an unworthy banquet. Do not think to break our discourse."

"I only hesitate, noble Emich, at seeing Heinrich Frey preferred to that seat, while the Lord of Hartenburg stands, like one of humble birth, at his side!"

"Touch not the matter, meine Frau," said the husband, condescendingly. "Thou art a loving consort, and art well enough amid thy sex, and in questions that belong to thy breeding; but in an affair, like this, between mein Herr Graf and me, thou mayst only mar what thou canst not mend."

"By the life of the princely Karl! master Heinrich, you do insufficient justice to Ulrike's discernment! Were mine own Ermengarde among us, thou shouldst see that we prize thy loving wife little less than we esteem thee. But it were better that we enquire of Ulrike the occasion of her visit, before we attempt to school her on matters of deportment."

Though so rough and unnurtured on many of the points that are now deemed essential even to an indifferent civilization, Emich had a quick interest for the perception of character, and possessed as much of the refinement that marks a superior condition in life, as the state of the age and the situation of his own country per-

mitted. There can be no greater mistake than to imagine that mere nominal rank is any pledge for a correspondent degree of refinement, since every thing is relative in this world, and where the base of the pillar is rude and little polished, it would be a violation of all architectural keeping to expect a capital of a different style. Thus it is that we, without any social orders, but those of convention, are struck with so many glaring discrepancies among people whose patricians, having studied all that is factitious and plausible in breeding, are still deficient in the grand essentials of reason and humanity, simply because the roots of the society, of which they are only the more luxuriant branches, are planted in the soil of ignorance and debasement. The Count of Hartenburg had possessed ample opportunities of witnessing how much the intellectual qualities of the Burgomaster's wife were superior to those of her husband; and he had sufficient discrimination and experience to

be quite aware of the importance of conciliating such an ally in advancing his own particular views. It was in this spirit, therefore, that he ventured on so blunt a reproof of Heinrich's superciliousness, and volunteered the compliment to the spouse; probably hazarding the latter, from an intimate conviction that most husbands are content to hear eulogies on those who are so completely in their power as their own wives.

"Since it is your honourable pleasure, Herr Count, for God's sake let the woman come in," answered Heinrich, still, however, without changing an attitude so soothing to his self-esteem. "If she should see me seated in a presence in which it would much better become me to kneel, why it may help to show that God hath given her a companion that is not altogether without the world's esteem, little as he may merit it. Enter freely, therefore, good Ulrike, since it is my lord's pleasure; but pre-

sume not on his condescension to me, which is rather a mark of great love for our town, than any matter connected with domestic life."

"In all that the high-born Count hath done honour to any of us, whether as of Duerckheim, or as his unworthy neighbours, I desire respectfully to be grateful," returned the wife, who, by this time, had recovered from her surprise, and who now advanced farther into the narrow room, with the modest self-possession which ordinarily distinguished her manner:—"If I do not come amiss, I crave to be heard of both, in a matter that toucheth nearly a mother's heart; and a matter, as it is of Heinrich Frey's child I would fain speak, that I trust may not be indifferent to my lord the Count."

"Were it of mine own little Kunigunde, the subject should not be more welcome!" said the noble. "Speak freely then, gentle Ulrike, and with the same simplicity thou wouldst use were it only to thy husband's ear."

"Thou hearest, woman! mein Herr Graf

enters, as it were, into all our tribulations and happiness, an' he were no other than a brother. So mince not the matter, but deal frankly with us; though I admonish thee not to push thy words to all the familiarity of household discourse."

"As it is of a subject so near, I pray leave to close the door, before more is uttered."

The words of Ulrike were cut short by a hasty gesture of approbation from her husband, and by the Count himself, who, with more of the consideration and manner of a gentleman, performed the desired office with his own hands, thus admitting the wife, as it were, into the very cabinet of their secret councils.

CHAPTER XII.

" You would be another Penelope: yet they
Say, all the yarn she spun, in Ulysses' absence, did
But fill Ithaca full of moths."

Coriolanus.

WHEN Ulrike found herself fairly closeted with the Count and her husband, and was quietly seated on the stool which the former, spite of the latter's protestations to the contrary, had insisted on her taking, she cast her mild eyes about her, with that expressive and touching appeal that a woman is apt to make, when she feels called on to act as the adviser, if not the guardian, of him whom nature intended and the law presumes, is both able and willing to

discharge those offices for her. Notwithstanding Heinrich's obstinacy and masculine swaggering, many occasions had arrived, in the course of their matrimonial life, to produce a latent conviction in both, that the order of things was a little inverted, as respects judgment and moral authority, by inclining one to lean, though with but an indifferent grace, where he should have supported, and tempting the other, at times, to overstep her sex's duties, though it was always done with an intuitive perception of her sex's seemliness and means.

"For this condescension I thank my Lord Emich, and thee, Heinrich," commenced the thoughtful matron; "for it is not, at all times, advisable for the wife to intrude unbidden even to her husband's presence."

A significant ejaculation, which might almost merit a coarser term, was the manner in which the Burgomaster expressed his assent, during the brief pause that succeeded this excuse of

Ulrike. The more courteous host bowed with sufficient respect, though, even by his manner, it was evident he was getting impatient to know the real motive of the interruption.

"We are too well pleased to receive thee, to remember the usages and rights of manhood," answered the latter, with a kindness of manner that was insensibly extorted by the winning and feminine qualities of her he addressed, and which, in some degree, softened the pretension of his language—"Proceed with thy matter, for none can be more ready to listen."

"Thou hearest, good Ulrike! the Herr Count is willing to remember thou art a Burgomaster's consort; and, as he is pleased to say, we are truly impatient to be let into the cause of thy sudden visit."

The thoughtful Ulrike received this encouragement like one accustomed to be treated, in some measure, as a being inferior in capacity and force to her husband, but not without a shade like that which is produced by unmerited

humiliation. Smiling—and few, even in early and attractive youth, had so sweet an expression, when her countenance thus gleamed, whether it were in pleasure, or in melancholy—smiling, as it might be, partly in female gentleness, and partly in sadness, she commenced the purport of her visit, coming, however, to her true object with great reserve, and with the caution of a woman accustomed to influence, rather than to control.

"For the great kindness and condescension of the Herr Emich, in behalf of Heinrich Frey, and of all that are his, no one is more grateful than I," she said; "if I may now seem to trouble him with the concerns of a family on which he has already so freely lavished favours"—

"And friendship, good Ulrike."

"And friendship—since you permit me, noble Count, to use the word—but, if I now seem to trespass beyond breeding, by troubling your mind with a concern that is so remote from

your own interests, I trust you will remember a mother's tenderness, and think of the high-born Ermengarde, whose anxiety for her own offspring may furnish some excuse for that I feel for mine."

"Hath aught befel the blooming Meta?"

"God's my life!" exclaimed the troubled Heinrich, abandoning his much-prized seat, in the suddenness of paternal alarm. "Hath the wench suffered from the over-rich eels of the Rhine? or is she massed to death by these accursed monks?"

"Our child is well in the body, and, the blessed Maria be praised! she is pure and innocent in mind," returned Ulrike. "I have little cause for aught but gratitude in either of these behalfs;—but, she is of an age when girlish fancies become unsettled, and the flexible female spirit seeks impressions from others than those whom nature hath made its guardians."

"This is some of thy usual incomprehensibilities, good woman, and language that is not

easily understood by any but thyself. The noble Graf hath no leisure to hunt up new ideas to maintain a discourse in subtleties. Had the girl indeed tasted too freely of the rare dish which the honest Burgomaster of Mannheim so kindly sent me, as I at first feared, no doubt the means to cure might be found in Hartenburg; but thou askest too much, wife of mine, when thou wouldst have any but thine own husband enter into all the cunning niceties that sometimes beset thy imagination."

"Nay, Master Heinrich, here may be more urgent matter than thou thinkest: thy dame is not a woman whose opinions are to be neglected. Wilt proceed with thy recital, good Ulrike?"

"Our child is at that period of life," continued the mother, too much accustomed to the manner of her husband to permit it to divert her thoughts from their main intention—"when the young of every sort begin to think of the future. It is a principle that God hath implanted, Herr Emich, and therefore it is for

good; and we, who have watched over the infancy of our offspring with so much anxiety, have trained their youth with so much care, and have so often trembled for their noon-time, must, sooner or later, consent to loosen the sweet ties that bind us to our second selves, in order that the great ends of the creation shall be accomplished."

"Umph!" ejaculated Heinrich.

"Nay, gentle Ulrike," said the Count, "maternal love hath drawn this picture in stronger colours than may be necessary. When the time for matrimony comes, God's my life! daughter of thine and honest Heinrich Frey, need not wear maiden's coif a day longer than is necessary to do suitable reverence to the church. Here have I youths, out of number, that look to the house of Leiningen for grace, any one of whom would be glad to wive with the damsel I should name. There is young Friedrich Zantzinger, the orphan of my last deputy in the villages of the plain; he is a lad

that would gladly do harder service to gain my love."

"When old Friedrich left the boy fatherless, he left him without a penny," drily rejoined the Burgomaster.

"That is a fault which might be mended; but I have others that can be named. What thinkest thou of the eldest son of my Heidelberg attorney, worthy Conrad Walther?"

"Curse the knave; I hate him from my heart!"

"Thou art warm, Master Heinrich, against one that I both trust and favour."

"I cry your mercy, Herr Graf; but a sudden rising of the bile, at the mention of the fellow's name, got the better of respect," answered the Burgomaster, with more moderation, who, as he saw by the lowering look of Emich's brow, the necessity of explanation, continued, with rather more openness than he might have thought necessary under circumstances of less urgency: "Perhaps the high-

born Count was never possessed of the matter of our late controversy?"

"Nay, I pretend not to judge my friends,—"

"Let but my lord condescend to hear me, and I leave him arbiter between us. It is well known to you, Herr Emich, that collections were made, and charity asked, in behalf of the peasants who suffered, the past year, from the sudden rising of the Rhine. Among others, the good Christians of our town were importuned for succour; and, for none will deny that it was a sad visitation of Providence, we gave freely as became our several means. To prevent improper uses of the money, in all cases of liberal donations, the sealed bond of the donor, at a near day, was asked in preference to the silver; and mine was granted for the fair sum of twelve crowns, as a poor donation suited to my hopes and station. It so fell out, Herr Graf, that those charged with the distribution had occasion for their money before the instruments were up, and they sent

agents among us, in order to enter into such negotiations as the cases might need. Gold was scarce at the moment; and because, in regaining my bond, I had a heedful regard to mine own interests, the misdealing Conrad would fain transport me, like a thief, before the authorities of Heidelberg, to undergo the penalties of a usurer. Son of his shall never call me father, with your gracious leave, nobly-born Count of Leiningen!"

"This truly offereth some impediment to the affair; but, failing of young Conrad, I have others that may be accounted worthy of this advantage. So put thy maternal heart at ease, good Ulrike, and trust to my active friendship to dispose of the girl."

The Burgomaster's consort had been a patient listener during the short but characteristic digression of her husband. Trained in the opinions of the times, she did not possibly endure all that a mother and a wife, of equal native sensibility, might now suffer at so evi-

dent a debasement of her sex; but as the laws of nature are permanent, neither did she escape a pang of wounded feeling as she heard the different expedients that were so hastily devised for the future disposal of one who formed her chief happiness in life. There was less of that hectic colour, which commonly gave a lustre to eyes that were by nature rather melancholy than bright, and her voice was fuller of emotion than before, as she continued.

"For all this heed of me and mine, I again thank the Herr Count; but there is a power that is stronger with the young than the counsel of the experienced, or even than the wishes of their friends," she said. "My intent, in intruding myself unbidden into this secret conference, was to say that Meta had listened to the voice of her sympathies more than to the usages of her class, and chosen for herself."

The Count and Heinrich Frey stared at the speaker in mute surprise, for neither fully

comprehended her meaning; while Ulrike herself, one of her objects being accomplished, in having made this long-dreaded declaration in the presence of a person able to repress the anger of her husband, sate silent, inwardly trembling for the consequences.

"Wilt thou explain the meaning of thy worthy consort, Herr Heinrich?" abruptly asked the Count.

"Zum Henker! you ask me to perform an office, Lord Count, that might better fit a Benedictine, or a clerk. When Ulrike, who is an excellent and obedient companion in the main, once gets upon the stilts of fancy, I never pretend to be able to raise an idea to the level of her shoe-buckle. Go to! thou hast well spoken, wife of mine; and it will now be better to seek our child, lest yonder cavalier of Rhodes be oiling her ears with the unction of flattery."

"Nay, by my house's honours! but I will

know more of this matter, thy fair and virtuous consort consenting, Master Heinrich. Wilt explain thyself freely, dame?"

Whether it be from the instinct of weakness and delicacy, or only the fruit of precepts constantly inculcated, a virtuous woman rarely admits the existence of the sentiment of love, either in herself or in any that is dear to her, without a feeling of shame, and possibly not without an intuitive knowledge that she is conceding some of the vantage ground of her sex's privileges.

This feeling was apparent in Ulrike, by the slow but complete suffusion of her cheek, and by the manner in which her looks avoided those of Emich, spite of the self-possession and calm of her years.

"I would merely say, Herr Emich," she replied, "that Meta, like all who are young and innocent, hath fancied an image of perfection, and that she hath found an original for her

picture in a youth of the Jaegerthal. While of this mind, she cannot, in honesty or in maidenly respect, become the bride of any other than him she loves."

"The affair grows clearer," returned the Count, smiling like one who took no very deep interest in the matter; "and it is as well explained as heart could wish — at least, heart of the youth in question. What thinkest thou of this, Herr Burgomaster?"

The comprehension of Heinrich Frey could not altogether misconceive so plain an explanation, and, since the moment when his wife had ceased speaking, he sat regarding her mild but troubled countenance, with parted lips and open eyes, like a man that first learns some unlooked-for intelligence of great moment.

"Herr Teufel!" exclaimed Heinrich, taking up the last words of the Baron, unconscious of the disrespect of what he did — "art talking of our own natural-born child?"

"Of none other. In whom else have I this motherly affection? — or for what other can I feel this deep concern?"

"Dost mean that Meta—my daughter, Meta Frey, hath inclination for son of woman, except it may be the natural love and reverence she beareth her own father? — that the girl hath truant and free fancies?"

"I say nothing to give this opinion of Meta, my daughter, Meta," returned Ulrike, with womanly dignity. "Our child has done no more than listened to the secret whisperings of nature; and in yielding her affections to a youth whom she hath often seen, and long known, she hath merely paid a homage to merit, that the most virtuous are the most apt to yield."

"Go to, Ulrike! Thou art well enough among thy household, and a woman for whom I have esteem; but these visions with which thou art so often troubled, give thee an air, at times, of being of less discernment than thou mayst fairly claim to be. Excuse the dame,

Herr Count; for though her own husband, and a little weak on the subject of her infirmities perhaps, there is not a more thrifty manager, a more faithful spouse, or a kinder mother in the Palatinate."

"Nay, thou little need say this to me. None know the worth of Ulrike better; and, I may add, few respect her so much. It were well to hear further of this matter, Heinrich; for, to treat thee in candour, there may lie more beneath this opening of the excellent wife, than is at first apparent. Our Meta hath seen the qualities of some worthy youth sooner than they have struck the eye of her quicksighted father, thou wouldst say:—is it not so, dame?"

"I would say that the heart of my child is so closely bound in that of another, as to leave little hope of happiness, should her matrimonial duties teach her to forget him."

"Thou thinkest then, good dame, that the young fancies of a female, when once indulged, are not to be removed by the offices of wife and

mother? — that a caprice of the imagination is stronger than a vow made at the altar?"

Though the eyes of both the Count and the Burgomaster were riveted on the fine and speaking countenance of Ulrike, the volume of eloquent nature that was thus opened to their observation, proved little better than a blank. Strong and dramatic exhibitions of feeling require but little interpretation for the dullest faculties; but few, indeed, are they who are capable of comprehending the secret workings of a spirit chastened and restrained as that of a virtuous but unhappily-paired woman. There is perhaps no one aspect of human nature more commonplace, or more easily understood, than that which is hourly offered by a worldly-minded and capricious fair. She runs her little career seemingly as erratic as a comet, though, in truth, her course is always to be calculated on the infallible principles of vanity and selfishness; but no secret is more hermetically sealed against impertinent and vulgar curiosity than

the elevated sentiments which sustain the suffering and silent female who is truly instinct with the high qualities of her sex.

We are no railer at the domination of man; for we are persuaded that he who would wish to transform the being that was created to be his solacer and companion, his guide in moral darkness, and his sharer in sorrow as in joy, into a wordly competitor, changing love and confidence to rivalry and contention, is but miserably instructed in that sublime ordinance of nature, which has thus separated the highest order of its creation into two great classes, so replete with mutual consolation and happiness.

Had the wife of the Burgomaster arisen, and in chosen terms made an appeal to the sympathies of her companions, in which language should unite with manner to produce an effect, she might have been understood as the every-day reader understands all such pictures of female character; but where she sat, silent, suffering, and meek, she was completely con-

cealed from any means of comprehension possessed by either. Her eye did not kindle, for long and patient subordination had taught her to submit to the misconstructions of her husband; nor scarcely did the faint colour of her cheek deepen, since the load at her heart counteracted the natural impulses of pride and resentment.

"I think, Lord Count, that when an innocent and youthful female heart yields to a power that nature perhaps has made irresistible," she said, "it, at least, merits to be treated tenderly. Meta hath few fancies of the kind you mention; and the attachment she feels, though doubtless deepened by those colours which the least experienced in the truths of life are the most apt to paint, is but the natural consequence of much association, and of great deserving on the part of the young man."

"This is getting to be plain, Herr Emich," said Heinrich Frey pithily, "and must needs

be looked to. Wilt condescend to name the youth thou meanest, Ulrike?"

"Berchthold Hintermayer."

"Berchthold Teufelstein!" exclaimed the Burgomaster laughing, though there was something like a secret conciousness of danger in the very manner in which he gave loose to his merriment. "A penniless boy is, truly, a fit husband for child of mine!"

The quiet blue eye of Ulrike was fastened on her husband; but she averted it with sensitive haste, lest it might betray that she was thinking of the time when her own father had consented to her marriage with one nearly as poor, merely because the penetration of the parent had discovered those qualities of prudence and gainful industry in his townsman, which after-experience so fully developed.

"He is not rich, Heinrich," was her answer; "but he is worthy: and why need a chill be thrown on the heart of Meta, for the desire

of that which she already hath in sufficient plenty ?"

" Hear you this, Herr Emich? My wife is lifting the curtain of privacy before your respected eyes, with a freedom for which I could fain cry mercy."

" Berchthold is a youth I love," gravely observed the Count.

" In that case, I shall say nothing disrespectful of the lad, who is a worthy forester, and in all things suited to his service in the family of Hartenburg; still, is he but a forester, and a very penniless one. I had not thought to dispose of the girl so soon, for a little maidenly leisure does none of the sex injury, Lord Count; but as she hath her head set upon this Berchthold, it may be well to wrap it in a matron's coif, by way of filling it with ideas more suited to her hopes."

" The remedy may prove fatal, Heinrich!" mildly observed Ulrike, raising her tearful eye to the obstinate features of the Burgomaster.

"Nay, I ought to know the constitution of the family; what has so well succeeded with the mother, cannot harm the child."

The wife did not reply. But Emich of Hartenburg had been deeply interested by her gentle and winning manner, for he had watched her countenance closely, and understood the womanly effort by which the appearance of calm was preserved. Turning to the Burgomaster, he laid a hand on his shoulder, with a friendly smile, and said—

"Herr Heinrich, thou hast a fair and gentle consort; but, I think, too, thou hast scarce less faith in me than in thy wife. Give us leave; I would fain reason this matter with Ulrike, without the aid of thy influence."

"A thousand thanks for the honour to me and mine, high-born Count! As to faith, I would leave the dame a year on Limburg-hill, without other thought than for her convenience; for none know the worth of Ulrike better, though she is so difficult to comprehend

when her fancy is molting. Now kiss me, dame, and prithee do no dishonour to the Count's council."

Thus saying, Heinrich Frey placed a hearty kiss on the soft cheek that the obedient Ulrike freely offered, and left his wife alone with the noble, without other thought than of the high distinction that was conferred on his name. The manner in which he prized the notice of the Baron was sufficiently manifested by the readiness with which he communicated the circumstance that Emich and his consort were closeted, on an affair touching the interests of the family of Frey, to all who would listen to his tale.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tales or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth!"
SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN the door was closed on the husband, the Count turned to the wife, and continued the discourse.

"I love young Berchthold Hintermayer, good Ulrike," he said, "and would gladly be of aid in this affair, which, I see plainly, thou hast much at heart."

"The mother would be unnatural that had not anxiety for the happiness of her child. In youth, Lord Count, we gaze before us, filling

the dim ascent with scenes drawn after our wishes, and peopling the world with the beings that we deem most necessary to our hopes; but when we have reached the eminence, whence the commencement and the end of life can both be plainly seen, do we first find truth. I am as little disposed as another to venture rashly on a union that has no better security for its fruits than a blind and feverish passion, that will be certain to consume itself by its own fierceness; but, on the other hand, none who have known life as I, can be disposed to consider lightly those resemblances of taste and opinions, those gentle touches of character and disposition, that are most likely to conduce to wedded love."

"Thou art esteemed lucky in thine own consorting, dame?"

"God hath much blessed me in many mercies—the question is of Meta, my Lord Count."

Ulrike, spite of herself, had changed colour; but, aided by the manner of matronly reserve

she immediately assumed, the little emotion passed with Emich as no more than a display of feminine reserve, that was intended to repress a curiosity he had no title to indulge.

"The question is of Meta, in sooth," he answered; "and, by Saint Benedict! the youth shall not want for friendly and free support. But favour should have favour's reward. If I give into thy humour in this concern of thy daughter's marriage, good Ulrike, in return, I expect of thee a service on which I scarce lay less stress."

The matron raised her eyes to the countenance of her companion, in surprise. One who had not so uniformly preserved her own self-respect, might have doubted of what she heard; but the look of the Burgomaster's wife merely conveyed a meaning of curiosity and innocence.

"You will deserve far more than I can bestow, Herr Count, should you do aught to secure the happiness of Meta."

"Fair wife," continued Emich, seating him-

self, and taking her hand, with the freedom which his superior rank and the usages of the country allowed, "thou knowest the manner in which these Benedictines have so long vexed our valley; and, being so deeply in the confidence of the honest Heinrich, thou must have suspected that, wearied of their insolence and exactions, we have seriously bethought us of the means by which to reduce them to the modesty that becometh their godly professions, and which might better justify their pretensions?"

Emich paused, and sat intently regarding the face of his quiet listener. He had unwittingly touched upon the very subject that had been the chief inducement with the Burgomaster's wife for intruding upon the privacy of the conspirators. She had long suspected their intentions; and, though she felt deep care for the future lot of Meta, and had gladly availed herself of a favourable occasion to break the ice on a subject that, sooner or later, must be

disclosed, her real object was to warn Heinrich against the probable consequences of the plot. In this disposition, then, she heard the Count with secret pleasure, and prepared herself to reply, in the manner she had long meditated.

"All that you say, Herr Count," she answered, "has more than once crossed my mind; and deeply have I grieved that those I so love and honour should thus meditate injury to the altars of God—plan desperate devices to interrupt his praise."

"How! dost thou call the whinings of these knaves praise of aught but their own hypocrisy?" interrupted Emich. "Are they not the instigators of most of our sins, by their example?—the parents of all the contention that troubles the neighbourhood? Consider, good Ulrike, that heaven is not a close into which souls are to be driven blindfolded; but that we, who are of the flock, have at least the right, as we have the means, of judging

whether the shepherds are fit for their office, or not."

"And should they prove unequal to, or unworthy of, their duties, where do we find authority to do them harm?"

"God's my life! good wife; are our swords nothing? Are a noble name, an ancient and high descent, a long-standing claim to command, and a stout heart, nothing?"

"Arrayed against the Almighty, they count as the leaves of your own forest, when fluttering in a gale;—less than the flakes of snow that drive, in winter, against the battlements of your strong castle. Limburg is reared in honour of God; and he that raises a hand against the sacred walls will be apt to repent the rashness in woe. If there are unworthy ministers at its altars, there are also those that are worthy; and, were it not so, the mission is too high to be sullied by any frailty of those who abuse their trusts."

The Count was disturbed; for Ulrike spoke

earnestly, and in a voice of sweet persuasion. He leaned his chin upon a hand, as a man that pondered well on the hazards of his enterprise.

"What thinkest thou, Ulrike, of this brother of Wittenberg?" he at length asked. "Could we but fairly make him out honest and wise, ecclesiastical authority for lowering the pride of Limburg might be had!"

"I am one of those who think Brother Luther honest; I am also one of those who think him mistaken: but even he is far from urging to deeds of violence."

"By Saint Benedict! woman, thou hast had converse with Father Arnolph, touching this question. Echo does not answer sound more faithfully than thou repeatest the sentiments of the Prior."

"It is not strange that they who love God should feel and speak alike in a matter affecting his honour. I have said nought to Father Arnolph, nor to any other of the abbey, of

your designs; for it is not easy for Ulrike Frey to forget she is both wife and mother. But I have prayed often, that the hearts of those who contemplate this dangerous sacrilege may be softened; and that, for their own safety, they may yet see the evil of their plot. Believe me, Count, the Dread Being who is worshipped in Limburg, will not forget to avenge himself of those who despise his power!"

"Thou art certain, Ulrike, that thy opinions have weight with me, for since childhood have I known and respected thy wisdom. Nay, had there not been want of those claims which birth can alone give, thou wouldst now be sitting in this castle its mistress, and not a guest. The self-denial which was practised, in order to do my father pleasure, cost me much pain for many years; nor did I rightly regain my freedom, until the birth of my eldest born turned my hopes towards posterity."

It is seldom woman hears the acknowledgement of her influence with the stronger sex, without secret satisfaction. As there had been nothing in the attachment to which the Count alluded, to alarm her principles or to offend her delicacy, Ulrike listened to this reference to the feelings and incidents of their younger days, with a smile that produced an effect on her gentle features, that resembled the melancholy light which illuminated the chapel of the religious community in question; or which was mild, placid, and, if we may be permitted an expression so vague, tinged with hues of the past.

"We are no longer young, Emich," she answered, withdrawing her hand, under a keen impulse of its propriety—"and that of which thou speakest belongs to a former age. But if thou dost, in sooth, entertain this opinion of my discretion, I have never said aught of thee but in thy honour. There were other reasons than the late Count's will, why I could not

listen to thy suit, as thou wert then informed; for we are none of us the controllers of those sentiments which so much depend on taste or accident."

"By the sainted eleven thousand of Koeln! Heinrich Frey was scarce a youth to do this disadvantage to the heir of my line and name!"

"Heinrich Frey received my troth, as the noble Ermengarde received thine, Herr von Hartenburg," answered Ulrike, with the composure of one whose feelings had never been interested in the refusal to which she alluded, and with the dignity of a woman sensitively alive to her husband's character. "By Heaven's favour, we are both happier than if wedded either above or beneath our hopes. But if thou couldst deny thy self this boon—for such, in thy young fancies, didst thou believe my hand—to oblige thy father of earth, wilt thou still defy him of Heaven, to gratify a longing less excusable?"

"Go to, Ulrike; thou pressest me out of reason; I know not fairly that I even meditate the enterprise thou meanest."

"Or, in other language, thou art not yet decided to commit the sacrilege. Before thy hand strikes the irretrievable blow, Herr Count, hear one that, in thy youth, thou professed to love, and who yet remembers thy preference with grateful kindness."

"Thou art more indulgent as a matron than as a maid! This is the first word of pity for all the sorrow thou caused my youth, that hath ever escaped thee!"

"Pity is a term it would ill become Ulrike Haitzinger to use to Emich von Leiningen. I said gratitude, Herr Count; for the woman that pretendeth not to feel this sentiment towards the honourable youth that has preferred her to all others of her sex, payeth an indifferent compliment to her own heart. I never disavowed that thy suit gave me both gratification and sorrow—gratification, that one

of thy hopes could find sufficient in me to justify thy choice; sorrow, that thou wert necessarily disappointed."

"And had our births been nearer an equality, gentle Ulrike; hadst thou, like me, come of noble parentage, or I, like thee, been of more humble origin, couldst thou, in sooth, have found in thy heart the excuse for a different answer?"

We are here to discuss other matters, Herr von Hartenburg, than these recollections of childish feelings."

"God's my life! Callest thou the pain of disappointed affection a childish sorrow? Thou wert ever tranquil in temper, and too much disposed to indifference on the subject of any warmth of heart, beyond the cold duties of family regard."

"This may be my fault, if you will, Count Emich, but I esteem it an advantage to feel strongest where duty most directs the affections."

"I remember thy final answer, made through thy friend young Berchthold's mother—I owe the lad no grace for the boon, were justice done —but thou answered, that the daughter of a Burgomaster was unfit to be the partner of a Baron; and thou prayed me to render all duty to the Count my father, that his blessing might lighten the disappointment. Now, were the truth known, that reply cost thee no more than a simple refusal to one of thy maidens of some trifling grace!"

"Were the truth known, Emich, it would tell a different tale. Thou wert then young, and, though violent and hot-headed, not without many manly virtues; and thou greatly overratest the power of a thoughtful girl, if thou supposest she would gladly give pain where she has received nought but esteem."

"And had I been thy neighbour's child—or wert thou the daughter of some equal of the empire?—"

"In that case, Lord Count, the answer would

have been the same," said the other, firmly, though her countenance evidently lost its tranquil brightness in a transient cloud: "The heart of Ulrike Haitzinger spoke in that reply, as well as her prudence."

"God's truth! thou art of cutting simplicity!" cried the Count, rising abruptly, and losing the expression of gentleness that the recollection of his better days and youthful feelings had given his features, in their usual hardened character. "Thou forgettest, Frau Frey, that I am a poor Count of Leiningen!"

"If I have failed in meet respect," returned the mild Ulrike, "I am now reminded of the fault, and will sin no more."

"Nay, I would say nought unkind or ungentle—but thou bruised my spirit, with a sore answer. We were conversing of the accursed monks, too, and blood gets hot at the mention of their names. Thou thinkest, then, my excellent neighbour, that, as Christians, we are bound to submit to all the exactions of these

reverend knaves, and that to presume to right ourselves, is flying in the face of Heaven's authority?"

"You put the case in your own humour, Count. I have said nought of abject forbearance, or of unnecessary submission. If the Limburg monks are forgetful of their vows, the question is of their own safety:—as for us, we have to look that we do nothing wrongful of itself, or nothing that may be accounted disrespectful to him we worship"—

"Prithee, good Ulrike," interrupted Emich, resuming his seat, in the familiar manner he had used at the commencement of the dialogue, "let us converse, in freedom, of this inclination of thy child. I love young Berchthold, and would fain do him service, were the means offering; but I greatly fear we shall have difficulty in bringing Heinrich to a complying state of mind."

"The apprehension of his refusal hath caused me much uneasiness, Herr von Hartenburg,"

returned the tender mother; "for the Burgomaster is not one of those who changes his opinions readily. The over-zealous persuasion of friends increases his faith in himself, at times, instead of softening those resolutions which the wisest of us are apt to form hastily and without thought."

"This quality of thy excellent consort hath not escaped me. But Heinrich Frey was wived so happily himself, and with so little claim to riches on his own part, that he should not, in reason, bear too heavily on a youth that might have known better days, but for a hard fortune befalling his parents. He that hath been poor, should have respect for poverty in others."

"I fear that such is not the working of human nature," answered the thoughtful wife, nearly unconscious of what she uttered. "Our experience in life would prove that they who have risen, show the least tolerance for those who tarry in the rear; and, as none prize the gifts of rank and consequence so much as they

to whom they are novelties, we ought not to expect the successful man too soon to forget the longings he felt when in adversity, nor him to whom honours are new, to look too closely into their vanity."

"Nay, Heinrich is not so young in consideration, or so new to fortune, as to be classed with these."

"Heinrich!" exclaimed the matron, across whose chaste brow there stole a crimson suffusion, that resembled the flush of even upon the snowy peaks of the Alps—"There is not question, here, of Heinrich Frey!"

The Count smiled till the mustachios curled upon his brown cheeks.

"Thou art right," he answered courteously; "it is of Berchthold and Meta that we are most interested. I think I see the means of accomplishing all we wish in their behalf, and means that offer so readily as to wear the air of being a gift of Providence."

"They are only the more welcome for their character."

"Thou knowest, Ulrike, that I am greatly burthened with charges that lay heavily on all of my rank. Ermengarde hath most of the qualities of her station, and a love of splendour that is costly; besides, this outfit of my young heir, who travels with the Emperor, hath much drained me of means, of late; else would I offer, of pure love for thee and thine, that which would make the connexion acceptable to Heinrich. In this strait, borne down, as we all are, by the war, and saddled with the cost of keeping on foot so many men in Hartenburg, I see no other present means than that I have just mentioned."

"Or have not mentioned; for, in the desire to prove your inability to serve the youth, nothing hath yet been said of this favourable chance offered by Providence."

"I cry thy mercy! Thou hast rightly judged me, Ulrike, for I feel it a reproach to be able to do nothing for one I so esteem."

"Put no undue meaning on my words," in-

terrupted the matron, smiling like one who wished to re-assure her companion. "It has never entered my thoughts that the Counts of Leiningen are bound to portion all who serve them, according to their several hopes. It would lighten the heaviest purse in the Palatinate, Herr Emich, to furnish an equal marriage-gift to that which may be the share of Meta Frey."

"None know this better than I. Heinrich and I have often discoursed of the affair, and I could fain wish there existed no inequality of rank—but this is idle, and we will talk only of Berchthold and his hopes. Thou art aware, Ulrike, that there are heavy issues between me and the brotherhood concerning certain dues, not only in the valley, but on the plain, and that the contest fairly settled in my favour will much increase my revenues. Now were this unhappy dissension decided as I could wish, it would not only be in my power, but it would become my wish, to bestow such grace on all

my principal followers, and on none so much as on Berchthold, as might leave a favourable opinion of my bounty. We want but this affair rightly settled to possess the means of winning Heinrich to our desires."

"Could this be honestly done, my blessing on him that shall effect it!"

"I rejoice to hear thee say this, good Ulrike. Thou, of all others, may be most useful in the matter. Heinrich and I have well nigh decided on the fitness of disturbing the monks in their riotous abominations"—

"The words are strong, when applied to professed Benedictines!"

"By the holy Magi! they are more than merited. Here, has not the day twice turned since I had Bonifacius himself weltering in wine beneath the roof of Hartenburg, an' he had been a roisterer of a suburb! Bonifacius, Limburg's Abbot, have I seen in this unfit condition, Frau Ulrike, within mine own good castle walls!"

"And in thine own good castle company, Herr Emich?"

"Dost thou make no difference between baron and monk? Am I a sworn professor of godliness, a shaven crown, or one that looketh to be accounted better than his fellows? That I am noble is the chance of fortune, and as such I receive and profit by the advantage, though, I truth, always in fitting reason; but no man can say that Emich of Leiningen pretends aught to the especial virtues of a monkish character. We that are modest may claim to indulge our failings, but justice should heavily visit him that sins under a cloak of sanctity."

"I know not that thy exception may avail thee in the end. But thou wouldst say something to Berchthold Hintermayer's advantage?"

"That would I, and right heartily. Could Heinrich be brought to a firm mind, that I might count on the support of the townsmen, these reprobates in cowls should be quickly

disposed of; and, as of necessity, my dues would be much augmented, by clothing Berchthold with a deputy's authority over the recovered fields and villages, he should so gain in men's respect, as to soften the reluctance of the hardest-hearted Burgomaster in all Germany."

"And in what manner dost thou look to me, in effecting this object?"

"One of thy understanding need scarce put the question. Thou hast been long a wife, Ulrike, and art skilled in the persuasions of thy sex. I know not thy practice with Heinrich; but when Ermengarde would have her way, spite of her husband's inclinations, she has various manners of coming to her wishes. To-day she is smiling, to-morrow silent; now she fondles, and then she frowns; and, most of all, is she ready in seizing the moments of idle confidence to press on my unprepared reason the arguments of kisses and coquetry."

"It were idle to say I do not understand you, Herr von Hartenburg. I wish not to raise

the curtain of your domestic confidence, nor do I feel disposed that any should presume to lift mine. Heinrich and I pursue our several ways, as each deems right, though, I trust, always with the harmony of wedded interests, and I am little practised in the influence you mention. But, dear as Meta is to the heart of her mother —and surely no shoot from the parent stem ever gave fonder hopes, or justified more tender regard"—Ulrike folded her hands, and turned her meek blue eyes to heaven—"much as I esteem young Berchthold, who is the child of my youth's nearest friend; and gladly as I would see their young hearts for ever bound up in the same ties of family concord and matrimonial love, the common parents of lisping, laughing babes that should cluster at my knee, giving the evening of life some compensation for the chill of its noon-tide—rather than aid thee in this unhallowed design; rather than do aught, even in rebellious thought, against the altars of my God; rather than set my selfish-

ness in array against his dread power, or fancy wish of mine can prove excuse for sacrilege—I could follow the girl to her grave, with a tearless eye, and place my own head by her side, without regret for that calm decline which, when the weary probation of life is ended, Heaven grants to the deserving."

The Count of Leiningen recoiled at the energy with which his companion spoke, for none are so commanding as the mild when aroused to resistance, or so authoritative as the good when required to exhibit the beauty of their principles. He was disappointed; but, though a sort of instinct warned him that he had no further hopes of gaining the assistance of Ulrike, and, almost without knowing it himself, the respect which he had always entertained for his companion was increased. Taking the hand she extended to him, in amity, the moment her excitement had a little abated, he was about to reply, when a footstep in the adjoining room, and a timid tap at the door, interrupted him.

"Thou canst enter," said the Baron, believing that one of the castle maidens was without, and glad of the relief.

"A million of thanks for the honour," returned Ilse, curtseying to the floor as she availed herself of the privilege. "This is the first time so great a favour ever befel me in Hartenburg, though, when a girl, as it might be a ruddy maiden like our Meta, I once was admitted to a closet in Heidelberg. There was I, and the late Burgomaster, Ulrike's father, and the good wife, her mother, on a junketting, in our young days, to see the curiosities of the Elector's palace, and we had visited the tun"—

"Thou art sent to seek me?" interrupted the mistress. "Hath Meta need of her mother?"

"That may be always said of a certainty, for girls of that age are like the young of the nest, Herr Count, who are ever in danger of breaking their necks, if they take a hasty flight without the example of the old to give them

prudence as well as courage. Twenty times each day—I know not an' it be not fifty—do I say to our Meta, 'Do as thou wilt, child, an' thou dost nothing amiss.' I hold it to be wrongful to curb young humours so long as they are innocent; and therefore do I say, that kindness is a better rod than anger; and, in this reproving and chastening manner, Herr von Hartenburg, have I reared both Meta and her mother. Well, here you both are, in friendly communion, an' you were children of the same cradle!—and Heinrich Frey is yon, without, tasting the rhenish with the two churchmen that infect the castle"—

"Thou wouldst surely say frequent, good nurse."

"What matters a word, child! Infect or frequent are much the same, when one speaketh of the gentle and gay! I remember ye both young and handsome, and a pair that the whole town of Duerckheim said ought never to be parted; for if one was noble, the other was

good; if one was strong and valiant, the other was fair and virtuous; but the ways of the world led ye on different paths, and Heaven forbid that I should say aught against ways that so many travel!"

"And thou hast left Meta with those that infect the castle, to come and say this?"

"Nought like it. It is true I let the girl listen to a few of their idle words, for without experience a maiden may not know when to repulse an improper freedom; but for any levity to escape my eye, were as impossible as for my Lord Count to fail in duty to the Limburg altars. No, I complain not of the stranger nobles; for while he of Rhodes did many gentle offices in behalf of Meta, the reverend Abbé held me in discourse touching this heresy of Luther, and, I warrant you, ecclesiastic as he is, he went not away the worse for my opinion of the schismatic! We had goodly discourse on the dangers and tribulations of the times, and might have had much learning be-

tween us, but for young Berchthold, who fancied himself beating the forest, by the manner in which he threshed among the old armour of the hall, disturbing all present with the idle pretence of seeking a cross-bow for the Count's pleasure in the morning; as if the Herr Count would have hunted with less satisfaction because there were wise words uttered in his halls! The Hintermayers are a race I love, but this youth seemeth to be wanting of respect for years."

"And what hast done with my child?"

"Thou knowest it was thy desire she should say a few greetings to the fallen Lottchen; and when I thought the wandering cavalier had had his say, I beckoned the child away, in order that she might go to the hamlet on that errand. She will be none the worse for the discourse with that free cavalier, for nought so quickens virtue of the pure stamp as a little contamination with vice—it is like the base metal they

put in gold, to make the precious ore hard and able to undergo many hands."

"Thou hast not suffered Meta to go unattended?"

"Didst ever know me fail in duty? Thy motherly heart is quick to take alarm, like the bird fluttering at each leaf that rustles. Not I, in sooth: I sent the vain Gisela to keep her company, and whispered our Meta well, as they departed, not to fail to draw instruction from her companion's light discourse, which, I will warrant, turns on nought else but the gallantries of these strangers. Oh! leave old Ilse to profit by any thing edifying that may turn up, in the way of accident! I that never yet lost a good moral for want of pushing an opportunity! and here stands Ulrike as proof of what I have done. I owe you excuses, Herr Emich, for sending away your forester; but the boy vexed me with his clatter among the shields and arquebuses, and, in order to give him a whole-

some lesson in silence, I sent him to see Meta safe to his mother's door, under the pretence of its being necessary to have a manly arm present, to beat off the barking curs of the hamlet."

"Does Heinrich know this?"

"In sooth, he is so beset with thy honour in being closetted with my Lord the Count, that he does little besides talk of it, and take his cup. When the child was thus cared for, by the one who first held her in arms, and one, too, whose experience is little short of threescore and fourteen, I saw not the necessity of calling him from his pleasures."

Ulrike smiled, and turning to the Count, who had been so much lost in thought as to give little heed to the words of the nurse, she offered him her hand, and they left the closet in company.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Ah, now soft blushes tinge her cheeks,
And mantle on her neck of snow."

ROGERS.

THE cottage of Lottchen, the mother of Berchthold, was distinguished from the other habitations of the hamlet, only by its greater neatness, and by that air of superior comfort which depends chiefly on taste and habit, and of which poverty itself can scarcely deprive those who have been educated in the usages and opinions of a higher caste. It stood a little apart from the general cluster of humble roofs; and, in addition to its other marks of superiority, it possessed the advantage of a small

enclosure, by which it was partially removed from the publicity and noise that rob most of the villages and hamlets of Europe of a rural character.

We have had frequent occasions to allude to the difficulty of conveying accurate ideas of positive things, or even of moral and political truths, while using the terms which use has appropriated to the two hemispheres, but which are liable to so much qualification in their respective meanings. What is comfort in one country would be thought great discomfort in another, and even the two higher degrees of comparison must always be understood subject to a right knowledge of their positive qualities. Thus most beautiful conveys nothing clear, without we can agree on what is beautiful; while neatness and elegance, and even size, taken in their popular significations, become purely terms of local convention. Were we to say that the cottage of Lottchen Hintermayer resembled, in the least, one of those white and spotless

dwellings, with its Venetian blinds and pillared piazzas, its grassy court in front, and its garden teeming with golden fruit in the rear, its acacias and willows shading the low roof, and its shrubbery exhaling the odours that a generous sun can extract, we should give such a picture to the reader as Europe nowhere presents—nowhere, because in those regions in which nature has been bountiful, man has been held in mental duresse; and in those in which man is sufficiently advanced and free to require the indulgences we have named, nature denies the boons so necessary to their existence. Here, and here only, do those whom fortune has not smiled upon, possess the union of comfort, space, retirement, and luxury, which depend on the causes named, for it is only here that are found the habits necessary to their production, in conjunction with the required climate and a cheapness of material and land, to place the whole within the reach of those who are not affluent. We wish, therefore, to be understood as speak-

ing, at all times, under the consciousness of this difference in the value of terms, for, without such an understanding, there will be little intelligence between us and our countrymen.

We have made this explanation, lest the reader might fancy some affinity between the hamlet of Hartenburg and one in the older settlements of the Union. The remoteness of the period might indeed give some reason to suspect such a resemblance, but were the tale one of our own times, it would be scarcely probable. The Germans, like all the more northern nations, are neat, in proportion to their several degrees of civilization, and the great frequency of the little capitals which dot its surface, and which have all been, more or less, beautified by their respective princes, has caused it to possess a greater number of spacious and cleanly towns, in proportion to its population, than are to be met with in most of the other countries of the

European continent; but, as elsewhere in that quarter of the world, the poor are poor indeed.

The little cluster of houses that were grouped beneath the salient bastions of Hartenburg, had the general character of poverty and humility which still belongs to nearly all such hamlets. The buildings were constructed of timber and mud, with thatched roofs, and openings to which, in that age, glass was a stranger. In speaking of the comfort of the dwelling of Lottchen, we wish to say little more than that it was superior to its fellows in these particulars, and that it had the additional merit of faultless neatness. The furniture, however, gave much stronger evidence of the former condition of its tenant. Enough of this description of property had been saved from the wreck of her husband's fortunes, to leave before the eyes of its mistress those traces of happier days—one of those melancholy consolations in adversity which are common among those whose fall has

been broken by some light circumstances of mitigation, and which, as monitors to delicacy and tenderness, make touching appeals to the recollections of the spectator. But Berchthold's mother had still better claims to the respect of those who came beneath her humble lintel. As we have already said, she had been the bosom friend of Ulrike in early youth, and, by education and character, she was still every way worthy of holding so near a trust with the wife of the Burgomaster. The allowance of her son was small in money, but the Count permitted his forester to use the game freely; and, as German frugality left her mistress of the wardrobes of several generations, the respectable matron had never known absolute want, and was at all times able to make such a personal appearance as better suited her former than her present means. In addition to these advantages, Ulrike never visited the Jaegerthal without thought of her friend's necessities; and full often, at times and seasons when this sacred

duty could not be performed in person, was Ilse dispatched to the hamlet as the substitute of her considerate and affectionate mistress.

The cavalcade from the abbey had, of necessity, passed the door of Lottchen, and she was fully aware of the intended visit; when, therefore, Meta, blooming and happy, entered the cottage attended by the warder's daughter, and accompanied by Berchthold, though secretly rejoicing in what she saw, the pleased and watchful matron neither expressed nor felt surprise.

"Thy mother?" were the first words which passed the lips of the widowed Lottchen, after she had kissed the glowing and warm cheek of the girl.

"Is closeted with the Herr Emich, my father says, else would she be sure to be here. She has sent me to say this."

"And thy father?" added Lottchen with emphasis, glancing an uneasy eye from Meta to her son.

"He drinks of rhenish with the castle wassailers. Truly, my mother Lottchen, thou must find the hamlet unquiet with these graceless spirits in the hold. Our Limburg monks are scarcely so thirsty; and for idle discourse, I know not their equal in Duerckheim, town of vanities and folly though it be, as good Ilse is apt to say."

Lottchen smiled—for she saw by the playful eye of her young visitor that nothing unpleasant had occurred; and giving Gisela welcome, she led the way within.

"Does Heinrich know of this visit?" asked the widow, when her young guests were seated, and with a painful interest in the answer.

"I tell thee, Lottchen, that my father quaffs with the strangers. Here is Berchthold, thy son—the restless, impatient Berchthold—he can tell thee, mother, into what goodly company the Burgomaster of Duerckheim hath fallen!"

As Meta said this, she laughed, though, in

very sooth, she scarce knew why. The more experienced Lottchen saw little else in the mirth of her young visitor than one of those buoyant impulses of youth which lead equally to gaiety and sorrow, without sufficient cause; but she watched the countenance of her own child with solicitude, to note how far he sympathized with the merriment of Meta. Berchthold, by speaking, was the interpreter of his own thoughts.

"Since thou appealest to me," he said, "my answer is, that Heinrich Frey consorts at present with two as hopeless idlers as ever darkened door in Hartenburg. Truly, Brother Luther needs bestir himself for the Church, when such as these go forth in its garments!"

"Say what thou wilt, Master Berchthold," cried Gisela, "of the prating, half-shaven Abbé, but respect him of Rhodes as a soldier in evil fortune, and one that is both gentle and gallant."

"As gallant as thou wilt," cried Meta, with warmth; "thy humour for mild discourse must

be formed by the rude company of the bold, if thou stylest these gentle!"

Lottchen had examined each face earnestly, and her countenance brightened with the frankness and fervour of the last speaker. She was about to say something in guarded commendation of her judgment, when a light step was heard before the outer door, and Ulrike herself entered. Notwithstanding the early departure of the young people from the castle, and the trifling distance between its walls and the hamlet, so much leisure had been wasted in idle laughter by the way, or in culling flowers on the hill-side, that she had sufficient time to exhaust all that old Ilse had to recount concerning the manner in which she had disposed of her charge, and to follow them to the cottage ere the discourse had gone farther. The meeting between the friends was, as wont, warm and happy. When the usual inquiries were exhausted, and a few unmeaning observations had been made by the girls, the younger part of

the company were gotten rid of, under pretence of conducting Meta to witness the manner in which Berchthold had arranged the nests for some doves, which had been a present from herself to his mother. The two parents saw the departure of their children, always accompanied by Gisela, with satisfaction; for each had need of a secret conference with the other, and both knew how apt youth and inclination were likely to prolong their absence by means of those thousand little delays which form the unconscious and innocent coquetry of love.

When left to themselves, Ulrike and Lottchen sat for some time, with hands interlocked, regarding one another earnestly.

"Thou hast borne the trying season of the spring time well, good Lottchen," said the former, with affection. "I have no longer any fear that thy health might suffer in this damp abode."

"And thou lookest youthful and fair as when we strolled, like thy Meta there, laugh-

ing and thoughtless girls, on the heath of the Heidenmauer. Of all I have known, Ulrike, thou art the least changed by time, either in form or heart."

The gentle pressure, before they released each other's hands, was a silent pledge of their mutual esteem.

"Thou findest Meta blooming and happy?"

"As she meriteth to be; and Berchthold — I think him fast growing into the comeliness and force of his sire?"

"He is all I could wish — one qualification excepted, my friend; and that, thou well knowest, I do not wish him for any other reason than to satisfy Heinrich's scruples."

"For my child that qualification is hopeless. Berchthold has too much generous indifference to gold ever to accumulate, were the means his. But what hope is there for an humble forester, who travels his range of chase, follows his lord to ceremonies, or attends him in battle?"

"The Herr Emich values thy son, and I do

think would fain do him favour. Were the Count earnestly to reason with Heinrich, all hope would not yet be lost."

Lottchen dropped her eyes to the work on which her needle was employed, for necessity had rendered her systematically industrious. The pause was long and thoughtful: but while Ulrike pondered on the chances of overcoming her husband's love of money and his worldly views, a very different picture had presented itself to the mind of her friend. The eyelids of the latter trembled, and a hot tear fell upon the linen in her lap.

"I have thought much of late, Ulrike," she said, "of the justice of burthening thy happiness and golden fortunes with the load of our adversity. Berchthold is young and brave, and there seems as little necessity as there is right in weighing thee and Meta down to our own level. I have anxiously wished for the means of counselling with some friend less interested than thou, on the fitness of what we

do; but it is difficult to speak of so delicate a subject without wronging thy daughter."

"If thou wouldst have the most disinterested and wisest of all advisers, Lottchen, take counsel of thine own heart."

"That tells me to be just to thee and Meta."

"Dost thou know aught of Berchthold's manners or mind, that may have escaped the observation of an anxious mother, who desires to match her own child with none but the deserving?"

Lottchen smiled through her tears, and gazed at the mild features of Ulrike with reverence.

"If thou wouldst hear evil of the youth, do not come to her who hath no other hope, for the tidings. The orphan is the sole riches of his widowed mother, and thou mayst not get the truth from one that regards her treasure with so much covetousness."

"And dost thou fancy, Lottchen, that thy son in poverty is dearer to thee than is Meta to her mother, though Providence may have left

us wealth and consideration? Misfortune hath indeed changed thee, and thou art no longer the Lottchen of my young days!"

"I will say no more, Ulrike," answered the widow, in a low voice, speaking like one rebuked; "I leave all to Heaven and thee! Thou art certain that were Berchthold Count of Leiningen, his and my desire would be to see Meta his bride."

A nearly imperceptible smile played upon the sweet mouth of Ulrike, for she bethought her of the recent discourse with Emich; but there was neither suspicion nor discontent in the passing thought. She was too wise to put human nature to very severe tests, and much too meek to believe all who fell short of perfection unworthy of her esteem.

"We will think of things as they are," she answered, "and not dwell on impossible chances. Wert thou Ulrike and I Lottchen, none can believe more fervently than I, that these opinions would undergo no change. Of Meta thou art

sure, my friend; but truth bids me say, that I fear Heinrich will never yield. His mind is much occupied with what the world deems its equality of interests; and it will be hard, indeed, to bring him to balance virtues against gold."

"And is he so wrong? Of what excellence is Berchthold possessed, that does not find at least its equal in Meta?"

"Happiness cannot be bartered for, as we would look into the value of houses and lands. He is wrong; and I could weep—oh, how bitterly I have wept!—that Heinrich Frey should be thus bent on casting the happiness of that artless and unpractised child on the rude chances of so narrow calculations. But we will still hope," added Ulrike, drying her tears, "and turn our thoughts to the more cheerful side."

"Thou saidst something of the power of my boy with the Count, and of his wish to do us service?"

"I know no other means to move Heinrich's mind. Though kind and yielding to me, in all matters that he believes touch my state, he believes that no woman is a fit judge of the world's interests; and, I fear I should add, that, from too much familiarity with my poor means, he places his wife lowest among her sex in this particular: there is no hope, therefore, that any words of mine can change him. But the Lord Emich has great hold on his judgment, for, Lottchen, they who prize the world's smiles, ever yield reverence to those that chance to possess them largely."

The widow dropped her eyes, for rarely, in their numerous and friendly conferences, did her friend allude to the weaknesses of her husband.

"And the Herr Emich?" she asked, desirous to change the discourse.

"The Count is much disposed to aid us, as I have said; for I have laid bare to him our wishes this morning, and have much entreated him to do this kind act."

"It is not wont for thee to be the solicitor with the Herr von Hartenburg, Ulrike!" rejoined Lottchen, raising her eyes again to the countenance of her friend, across whose cheek there passed a flush so faint as to resemble the reflection of some bright colour of her attire, while a still less obvious smile dimpled the skin. The looks that were exchanged told of recollections that were both joyous and melancholy, being, as it were, hasty but comprehensive glances into the pregnant volume of the past.

"It was the first request," resumed Ulrike; "nor can I say the boon was absolutely refused, though its gift was coupled with a condition impossible to grant."

"If it were too much for thy friendship, it must have been hard indeed!"

Lottchen spoke under the influence of one of those sudden and keen impulses of disappointment, which sometimes make the strong in principle momentarily forget their justice, and Ulrike perfectly understood the meaning

of her words. The difference in their fortunes, the hopelessness of the future with the fallen Lottchen, and all the bitterness of unmerited contumely and poverty, the severe judgments which a thoughtless world inflicts on the unlucky, passed quickly through the mind of the latter, amid a tumult of regrets and recollections.

"Of this thou shalt judge for thyself, Lottchen," she answered calmly; "and when thou hast heard me, I require thy unconcealed reply, conjuring thee, by that long and constant friendship across which no cloud has ever yet passed, to lay bare thy soul, shading no thought, nor desiring to colour even the most latent of thy wishes!"

"Thou hast only to speak."

"Hast thou never suspected, that all this warlike preparation in the hold, and the presence of the men-at-arms in Limburg, tend to no good?"

"Both speak of war; but the Elector is sore

pressed, and it is now long since our Germany was at perfect peace?"

"Nay, thy surmises must have gone beyond these general causes."

The look of surprise assured Ulrike she was mistaken.

"And Berchthold? Has he said nought of his Lord's intentions?" continued the latter.

"He talks of battles and sieges, like most of his years, and he often essays the armour of his grandfather, which lumbers yon closet; for thou knowest, though not of knightly rank, we have had soldiers in our race."

"Is he not angered against Limburg?"

"He is, and yet is he not. There is a little flame of resentment, I regret to say, in all of the Jaegerthal against the monks, which is much fanned in my son by his foster-brother, Gottlob, the cow-herd."

"This flame hath descended to the hind from his Lord. All that Gottlob says, Emich hath more than hinted."

" Nay, there was revelling in the hold, between Bonifacius and the Count, no later than the night past !"

" Too much blindness to that which passeth before thy eyes, dear Lottchen, is a virtuous feeling of thy nature. The Count of Hartenburg plots the downfall of the abbey-altars, and he has this day sworn to me, that if I will win Heinrich to his wishes, no influence or authority of his shall be wanting to make Berchthold and Meta happy."

Lottchen heard this announcement with the silent amazement with which the unsuspecting and meek first hearken to the bold designs of the ambitious and daring.

" This would be sacrilege !" she exclaimed with emphasis.

" 'Twould be to disgrace the altars of God, that our desires might prevail."

There was a pause. Lottchen rose from her chair, with so little effort, that, to the imagination of her excited friend, it seemed her stature

grew by supernatural means. Then raising her arms, the widowed mother poured out her feelings in words.

" Ulrike, thou knowest my heart," she said: " Thou, who art the sister of my love, if not of my blood — thou, from whom no childish thought was hid, no maiden feeling concealed —thou, to whom my mind was but a mirror of thine own, reflecting every wish, all impulses, each desire—and well dost thou know how dear to me is Berchthold! Thou canst say, that when Heaven took his father, the yearnings of a mother alone tempted me to live; that for him, I have borne adversity with contentment, smiling when he smiled, and rejoicing when the buoyancy of youth made him rejoice; that as for him I have lived, so that for him would I die. Thou canst say, Ulrike, that my own youthful and virgin affections were not yielded with greater delight and confidence than I have witnessed this growing tenderness for Meta; and yet do I here declare, in the presence of

God and his works, that before a rebel wish of mine shall aid Count Emich in this act, there is no earthly sorrow I will not welcome, no humility that I will dread!"

The pious Lottchen sank into her seat, pale, trembling, and exhausted with an effort so unusual. The widowed mother of Berchthold had never possessed the rare personal attractions of her friend, and those which were left by time had suffered cruel marks from sorrow and depression. Still, where she now sat, her face beaming with the inspiration of the reverence she felt for the Deity, and her soul charged to bursting, Ulrike thought she had never seen one more fair. Her own eyes brightened with delight, for at that moment of spiritual elevation, neither thought of any worldly interests; and her strongest wish was that the Count of Hartenburg could be a witness of this triumph of principle over selfishness. Her own refusal, though so similar in manner and words, the natural result of their great unity of character,

seemed destitute of all merit; for what was the simple denial of one of her means, compared to this lofty readiness to encounter a contumely that was already so bitterly understood.

"I expected no less," answered Ulrike, when emotion permitted speech: "from thee, Lottchen, less would have been unworthy, and more could scarcely come! We will now speak of other things, and trust to the power of the dread Being whose majesty is menaced. Hast thou yet visited the Heidenmauer?"

Notwithstanding the excited state of her own feelings, which were, however, gradually subsiding to their usual calm, Lottchen took heed of the change of manner in her friend as she uttered the last words, and the slight tremor of the voice with which her question was put.

"The kindness of the anchorite to Berchthold, and his great reputation for sanctity, drew me thither. I found him of mild discourse, and a recluse of great wisdom."

"Didst note him well, Lottchen?"

"As the penitent regards him who offers consolation."

"I would thou hadst been more particular!"

The widow glanced towards her friend in surprise, but immediately turned her eyes, that were still filled with tears, to her work. There was a moment of musing and painful pause, for each felt the want of their usual and entire confidence.

"Dost thou distrust him, Ulrike?"

"Not as a penitent, or one willing to atone."

"Thou disapprovest of the deference he receives from the country round!"

"Of that thou mayst judge, Lottchen, when I tell thee that I suffer Meta to seek counsel from him."

Lottchen showed greater surprise, and the silence was longer than before, and still more embarrassing.

"It is long since thou hast named to me, good Lottchen, one that was so much and so warmly in our discourse when we were girls!"

The amazement of the listener was sudden and marked. She dropped her work, and clasped her hands together with force.

"Dost thou believe this?" burst from her lips.

Ulrike bowed her head, apparently to examine the linen, though really unconscious of the act, while the hand she extended trembled violently.

"I have sometimes thought it," she answered, scarce speaking above a whisper.

A merry laugh, one of those joyous impulses which spring from the gaiety of youth, was heard at the door, and Meta entered, followed by Berchthold and the warder's daughter. At this interruption the friends arose and withdrew to an inner room.

CHAPTER XV.

"I pray thee, loving wife, and gentle daughter
Give even way unto my rough affairs."
King Henry IV.

ABOUT an hour after the moment when Ulrike and Lottchen disappeared, as described in the close of the last chapter, the cavalcade of Heinrich Frey was seen moving along the Jaegerthal, beneath the hill of Limburg, on its way towards the town. Four light-armed followers of Emich accompanied the party on foot, under the pretence of doing honour to the Burgomaster, but in truth to protect him

against insult from any stragglers belonging to the men-at-arms who lay in the abbey—a precaution that was not altogether without utility, as the reader will remember that the path ran within call of the ecclesiastical edifices.

As the beasts ambled past the imposing towers and wide roofs, that were visible even to those who journeyed in that deep glen, Heinrich's countenance, which had been more than usually thoughtful ever since he passed beneath the gate of Hartenburg, grew graver; and Meta, who rode as usual at his crupper, heard him draw one of those heavy respirations which were so many infallible signs that the mental part of her worthy parent was undergoing extraordinary exercises.

Nor did this shade appear only on the face of the Burgomaster. A deep and thoughtful gloom clouded the fine features of his wife, while the countenance of the blooming daughter betrayed that sort of sombre rest which is apt to succeed high excitement; a moment in which

the mind appears employed in examining the past, as if disposed to dissect the merits and demerits of its recent enjoyments. Of them all, the male attendants alone excepted, old Ilse returned, as she had gone, self-satisfied, unmoved, and talkative.

"Count Emich hath displeased thee, father," Meta said quickly, when a respiration, which in one less physical would have been termed a sigh, gave her reason to think the Burgomaster's bosom was struggling with some bitter vexation; "else wouldst thou be more cheerful, and better disposed to give me thy parental counsel, as is thy habit, when we go together on the pillion."

"The occasion shall not fail, girl, and these abbey-walls offer in good time to prick my fatherly memory. But thou art in error, if thou thinkest that the souls of the Herr Emich and mine are not bound together like those of David and Jonathan. I know not the man I more love, or, the Emperor and the Elector

apart, as is my duty, the noble I so much respect."

"It is well it is so, for I greatly value these airy rides among the hills, and most of all do I prize a visit to the cottage of Lottchen!"

Heinrich ejaculated audibly; then, riding a short distance in silence, he continued the dialogue.

"Meta," he said, "thou art now getting to be of a womanish age, and it is time to fortify thy young mind in a manner that it may meet the cunning and malice of the world. Life is of great precariousness, especially to the valiant and enterprising, and we live in perilous times. He that is in his prime to-day, honoured and of credit, may be cut down to-morrow, or even to-night, to bring the allusion more closely to ourselves; and thine own parent is as mortal as any reptile that creeps, or even as the most worthless roisterer of the Electorate, that wasteth his substance, the saving of some gainful parent perhaps, in riotousness!"

"This is true, father," rejoined the girl, who, though accustomed to the homely morality of the good citizen, never before had heard the Burgomaster deal with so little deference to himself, and who spoke in a lowered tone, as if the reflection of his sudden humility produced a withering influence on her own self-esteem. "We are no better than the poorest of Duerckheim, and scarcely as good as poor Lottchen and Berchthold."

A stronger ejaculation betrayed Heinrich's displeasure.

"Let these honest people alone," he answered; "since each must be saved or be damned on his own account, let Lottchen and her son take such fare as Providence shall send: we have, just now, serious matters of great family concernment to occupy us. I would reason with thee gravely, child, and therefore, I have need of thy closest attention. It being conceded that I am mortal — an admission, thou mayst be certain, Meta, I should not loosely

make, or without necessity—it follows as a consequence, that, sooner or later, I must be taken from thee, when thou wilt be left an orphan. Now this great calamity may befall us both much sooner than thou fanciest; for, I repeat it, we live in perilous times, when hotheadedness and valour may any day bring a man to a premature end."

The round arm of Meta clung more forcibly to the body of the Burgomaster, who took the gentle pressure as so much proof of his child's concern in his supposititious end.

"Why tell me of this, father," she exclaimed, "when thou knowest it only makes both unhappy? Though young, it may be my fate to die first."

"That is possible, but little probable," returned Heinrich, with a melancholy air. "Giving nature a fair chance, it will be my turn to precede even thy mother since I have ten good years the start of her; and as for thee, I greatly dread it will be one day thy misfortune to

be left an orphan. God knows what will be the end of all these contentions that now beset us, and therefore I hold it wise to be prepared. Whenever the evil day of parting may come, Meta, thou wilt be left with a sore companion for one of tender years and little experience."

"Father!"

"I mean money, child, which is a blessing or a curse, as it proveth. Were I taken suddenly away, many idle and dissolute gallants would beset thee, swearing by their mustachios and beards that thou wert dearer to them than the air they breathe, when, in truth, their sole desire would be to look into the leavings of the departed Burgomaster. There is great difficulty in marrying one of thy neutral condition happily, for, while want of birth closeth the door of the castle and the palace against thy entrance, ample means give thee right to look beyond the mere burgher. I would fain have one of good hopes for a son-in-law, and yet no spendthrift."

"That may not be so easy of accomplishment, good father," returned Meta, laughing —for few girls of her years listen to conjectures or plans concerning their future establishment, without a nervous irritability that easily takes the appearance of merriment — "to me the world seems divided into those who get and those who spend."

"Or into the wise and foolish. There are three great ingredients that commonly enter into all marriages of girls in thy condition, and without which there is little hopes of happiness, or even of every-day respect. The first is the means of livelihood, the second is the consent and blessing of the parents, and the third is equality of condition."

"I had thought thee about to say something of tastes and inclinations, father!"

"Idle conceit, child, that any whim may change. Look at yonder peasant, who is trimming the abbey vines, — dost think him less happy with his cup of sour liquor, than if he

quaffed of the best rhenish in Bonifacius's cellar? And yet, had the hind his choice, doubt it not, he would be ready to swear none but the liquor of Hockheim should wet lip of his! The fellow might make himself miserable by mere dint of fancy, were he once to set his mind on other fare; but, taking life soberly and industriously, who so content as he? Oh! I have often envied these knaves their happiness, when vexation and losses have weighed upon my spirits!"

"And wouldst thou change conditions with these vine-trimmers, father?"

"What art thinking of wench? Is there not such a thing as order and propriety on earth?—And this brings me to my purpose. There has been question to-day concerning some silliness, not to say presumption, on the part of young Berchthold Hintermayer, in wishing to couple his poverty with thy means."

The head of Meta fell abashed, and the arm which clasped the body of her father trembled perceptibly.

"I doubt that Berchthold has not thought of this," she answered, in a voice but little above her breath, though her respiration was very audible.

"All the better for him, since such a desire would be just as unreasonable as it would be, on thy part, to wish to wed with Count Emich's heir."

"Nay, that silly thought never crossed me!" exclaimed Meta, frankly.

"All the better for thee, girl, since the Herr von Hartenburg has had the boy betrothed these many years. Well, as we now understand each other so well, leave me to my thoughts, for weighty matters press on my mind."

So saying, Heinrich composed himself to reflection, fully content with the parental lesson he had just imparted to his daughter. But in the few and vague remarks that had fallen from the Burgomaster, Meta found sufficient food for uncomfortable conjecture for the rest of the ride.

During the short dialogue between Heinrich and Meta, there had also been a discourse between Ulrike and the crone that rode on her pillion. The propensity of old Ilse to talk, and the well-tried indulgence of her mistress, induced the former to break silence the moment they were clear of the hamlet, and were so far advanced beyond the rest of the party as to render it safe to speak freely.

"Well," exclaimed the nurse, "this hath been, truly, a day! First had we matins in Duerckheim; and then, the stirring words of Father Johan, with the abbey mass; and, lastly, this high demeanour of the Count Emich. I do not think, good wife, that thou hast ever before seen the Burgomaster so preferred!"

"He is ever in the graces of the Herr von Hartenburg, as thou mayst know, Ilse," returned Heinrich's partner, speaking like one that thought of other things. "I would that they were less friendly at this moment."

"Nay, therein thou dost little justice to thy

husband. It is honourable to be honoured by the world's honoured; and thou shouldst wish the Burgomaster favour with all such, though it were even with the Emperor. But thou wert ever particular, even as a child; and I should not deal too harshly with a propensity that, coming as it were of nature, is not without reason. Ah! Heaven is ever tender with the good. Now, what a happy life is thine, Ulrike; here canst thou go forth before all that were once thy equals, a Burgomaster's companion, and not a varlet between Duerckheim-gate, or indeed thine own gate, and the Hold of Hartenburg, shall stand covered as thy steed shuffles past. This is it to be fortunate! Then have we worthy Heinrich for a master, and such another for keeping all in due respect is not to be seen in our town; and Meta, who, beyond dispute, is both the fairest and the wisest of her years among all the maidens, and thyself scarcely less blooming than of old, with such health and contentment

as might even disarm widowhood of its sorrows. Ah! what a life hath been thine!"

Ulrike seemed to arouse herself from a trance, as the nurse thus chanted praises in honour of her good fortune, and the sigh she drew, unconscious of its meaning, was long and tremulous.

"I complain not of my fate, good Ilse."

"If thou didst, I would cause the beast to halt, that I might quickly descend, for nothing good could come of a journey so blasphemous! No, gratitude before all other virtues, except humility; for humility leadeth to favours, and favour is the lawful parent of gratitude itself. I would thou couldst have been at my last shriving, Ulrike, and thou shouldst have heard questions of nice meaning closely reasoned! It happened that Father Johan was in the confessional, and when he had got the little I had to say of myself in the way of acknowledgment —for, though a great sinner, like all human, it is little I can do against Heaven at three

score and ten, — we came to words concerning doctrine. The monk maintained that the best of us might fall away, so as to merit condemnation; while I would have sworn, had it been seemly to swear in such a place, that the late Prior, than whom none better ever dwelt in Limburg, always gave comfortable assurance of mercy being safe, when fairly earned. I wonder not that these heresies should be abroad, when the professed throw this discouragement in the way of the old and weak!"

"Thou art too apt, good Ilse, to dwell on subtleties, when a meeker faith might better become thy condition."

"And what is this condition, prithee, that thou namest it as a disqualifier? Am I not aged—and can any say better what is sin, or what not? Didst thou know what sin was thyself, child, till I taught thee? Am I not mortal, and therefore frail—am I not a woman, and therefore enquiring—and am I not aged,

and therefore experienced? No, come to me, an' thou wouldst get an insight into real sin—sin that hath much need of grace!"

"Well, let it be thus. But, Ilse, I would recall thy mind to days long past, and take counsel of thy experience in a matter that toucheth me nearly."

"That must be some question of Meta; nought else could touch a mother nearly."

"Thou hast reason in part: 'tis of Meta, and of us all, in sooth, that I would speak. Thou hast now been to the Heidenmauer more than once with our girl, in quest of the holy Anchorite?"

"Have I not? Thou mayst well say more than once, since I have twice made that weary journey; and few of my years would have come off so lightly from the fatigue."

"And what is said in the country round of the holy man—of his origin and history, I mean?"

"Much is said; and much that is good and

edifying is said. It is thought that one blessing of his is as good as two from the abbey; for of him no harm is known, whereas there is much reputed of Limburg that had better not be true. For myself, Ulrike—and I am one that does not treat these matters lightly—I should go away with more surety of favour with a single touch of the Hermit's hand, than if honoured with blows from all of Limburg. But, from the account I except Father Arnolph, who, if he be not an anchorite, well deserves, from his virtues, to be one. Oh! that is a man, were justice done him, who ought never to taste other liquor than water of the spring, or other food than bread, hard as a rock!"

"And hast thou seen him of the Heidenmauer?"

"It hath been sufficient for me to be in sight of his hut. I am none of those that cannot have a good thing in possession, without using

it up. I have never laid eyes on the holy man, for that is a virtue I keep in store against some of the sore evils that beset all in age. Let any of the autumn plagues come upon me, and thou shalt see in what manner I will visit him!"

"Ilse, thou mayst yet remember the days of my infancy, and hast some knowledge of most of the events of Duerckheim for these many many years?"

"I know not what thou callest infancy, but if it mean the first cry thy feeble voice ever made, or the first glance of thy twinkling eyes, I remember both an' it were yesterday's vespers."

"And thou hast not forgotten the youths and maidens that then sported at our merry-making, and were gay in their time, as these we see to-day?"

"Call you these gay? These are hired mourners compared to those of my youth.

You that have been born in the last fifty years know little of mirth and gaiety. If thou wouldst learn"—

"Of this we can speak at another season. But since thy memory remains so clear, thou canst not have forgotten the young Herr von Ritterstein; he that was well received of old within my father's doors?"

Ulrike spoke in a low voice, but the easy movement of the beast they rode suffered every word to reach the ear of her companion.

"Do I remember Odo von Ritterstein?" exclaimed the crone. "Am I a heathen, to forget him or his crime?"

"Poor Odo! Bitterly hath he repented that transgression in banishment, as I have heard. We may hope that his offence is forgiven!"

"Of whom—of Heaven? Never, as thou livest, Ulrike, can such a crime be pardoned. It will be twenty years this night since he did

that deed, as all in the Jaegerthal well know; for there have been masses and exorcisms without number said in the abbey-chapel on his account. What dost take Heaven to be, that it can forget an offence like that?"

"It was a dreadful sin!" answered Ulrike, shuddering, for though she betrayed a desire to exonerate the supposed penitent, horror at his offence was evidently uppermost in her mind.

"It was blasphemy to God, and an outrage to man. Let him look to it, I say, for his soul is in cruel jeopardy!"

A heavy sigh was the answer of the Burgomaster's wife.

"I knew young Odo von Ritterstein well," continued the crone, "and, though not ill-gifted as to outward appearance, and of most seductive discourse to all who would listen to a honeyed tongue, I can boast of having read his inmost nature at our very first acquaintance."

"Thou understood a fearful mystery!" half whispered Ulrike.

"It was no mystery to one of my years and experience. What is a comely face, and a noble birth, and a jaunting air, and a bold eye, to your woman that hath had her opportunities, and who hath lived long? Nay, nay —young Odo's soul was read by me, as your mass-saying priest readeth his missal; that is, with half a glance."

"It is surprising that one of thy station should have so quickly and so well understood him, that most have found inexplicable. Thou knowest he was long in favour with my parents?"

"Ay, and with thee, Ulrike; and this proves the great difference of judgments. But not a single day, nay, not even an hour, was I mistaken in his character. What was his name to me? They say he had crusaders among his ancestors, and that nobles of his lineage bore the sign of the cross, under a hot sun and in a

far land, in honour of God; but none of this would I hear. I saw the man with mine own eyes, and with mine own judgment did I judge."

"Thou sawest one, Ilse, of no displeasing mien."

"So thought the young and light-minded. I deny not his appearance; 'twas according to Heaven's pleasure—nor do I say aught against his readiness in exercises, or any other esteemed and knightly qualities, for I am not one to backbite a fallen enemy. But he had a way! Now, when he came first to visit thy father, here did he enter the presence of the honest Burgomaster an' he had been the Elector, instead of a mere baron; and though there I stood, waiting to do him reverence as became his rank and my breeding, nay, doing him reverence, and that oft repeated, not a look of grace, nor a thank, nor a smile of condescension did I get for my pains. His eyes could not stoop to the old nurse, but were fastened on the

face of the young beauty, besides many other levities.—Oh! I quickly accounted him for what he was!"

"He was of contradictory qualities."

"Worse than that—a hundred fold worse. I can count you up his graces in brief speech—First was he a roisterer, that never missed occasion to enter into all debaucheries with the very monks he dishonoured,—"

"Nay, that did I never hear!"

"Is it reasonable to suppose otherwise, after what we know of a certainty? Give me but one bold vice in a man, and I will quickly show you all its companions."

"And is this true? Ought we not rather to think that most yield in their weakest points, while they may continue to resist in their strongest?—That there are faults, which, inviting the world's condemnation, produce indifference to the world's opinion, may be true; but I hope few are so evil as not to retain some portion of their good qualities."

"Hadst thou ever seen a siege, good wife, thou wouldst not say this. Here is your enemy, without the ditch, shouting, and screaming, and doing his worst to alarm the garrison. —I say now but what I have thrice seen here, in our very Duerckheim—but so long as the breach is not made, or the ladders placed, each goes his way in the streets, quietly and unharmed. But let the enemy once enter, though it be but by a window, or down a chimney, open fly the gates, and in pour the columns, horsemen and footmen, till not a house escapes rifling, nor a sanctuary violation. Now this blasphemy of Herr Odo was much as if a curtain of wall had fallen at once, letting in whole battalions and squadrons of vices in company."

"That the act was fearful, is as certain as that it was heavily punished; but still may it have been the fault of momentary folly, or of provoked resentment."

"It was blasphemy, and as such it is punished; why then say more in its defence?

Here cometh Meta within call, and it were well she should not hear her mother justify sin. Remember thou art a mother, and bear thy charge with prudence."

As the horse ridden by the Burgomaster and his daughter drew near, Ulrike ceased speaking, with the patient forbearance that distinguished her intercourse with the old woman. And during the rest of the ride, little more passed among the equestrians. On reaching his own abode, however, Heinrich hastened to hold a secret council with the chief men of the place.

The remainder of the day passed as was wont in the towns of that age. The archers practised with their bows, without the walls; the more trained arquebusiers were exercised with their unwieldy but comparatively dangerous weapons; the youthful of the two sexes danced, while the wine-houses were thronged with artisans, who quaffed, after the toil of the week, the cheap and healthful liquor of the Palati-

nate, in a heavy animal enjoyment. Here and there a monk of the neighbouring abbey appeared in the streets, though it was with an air less authoritative and assured, than before the open promulgation of the opinions of Luther had brought into question so many of the practices of the prevailing church.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Thus I renounce the world and worldly things."
ROGERS.

IT will be remembered, that the time of this tale was in the winning month of June. When the sun had fallen beneath those vast and fertile plains of the west, among which the Rhine winds its way, a swift and turbid, though noble current, that, like some bold mountaineer, has made a descent from the passes of Switzerland, to gather tribute from every valley on his passage, there remained in the air the bland and seductive warmth of the season. — Still the

evening was not a calm moonlight night, like those which grace a more alluring climate; but there reigned in its quiet, a character of sombre repose that constantly reminded all of the hour. It seemed a moment more adapted to rest than to indulgence. The simple habits of Duerckheim caused its burghers to shut their doors early, and, as usual, the gates of the town were closed when the bells sounded the stroke of eight. The peasant of the Jaegerthal had not even waited so long before they sought their beds.

It was, however, near ten, when a private door in the dwelling of Heinrich Frey opened, and a party of three individuals issued into the street. All were so closely muffled as effectually to conceal their persons. The leader, a man, paused to see that the way was clear, and then, beckoning to his companions, who were of the other sex, to follow, he pursued his way within the shadows thrown from the houses. It was not long ere they all reached the gate of

the town, which opened to the hill of the Heidenmauer.

There was a stronger watch afoot that night than was usual in Duerckheim, though the city, and especially at a moment when armies ravaged the Palatinate, was never left without a proper guard. A few armed men paced the street, at the point where it terminated with the defences, and a sentinel was visible on the superior wall.

"Who cometh?" demanded an arquebusier.

The muffled man approached, and spoke the leader of the guard in a low voice. It would seem, that he spoke him fair; for no sooner did he utter the little he had to say, than a bustle among the citizens announced an eager desire to do his pleasure. The keys were produced, and a way made for the exit of the party. But the man went no farther. Having procured the egress of his companions, he returned into the town, stopping, however, to hold discourse with those on watch, before he disappeared.

When without the gate, the females began to ascend. The way was difficult, for it lay among terraces and vineyards, by means of winding narrow footpaths, and, as it appeared, the limbs of those who were now obliged to thread them, felt all the difficulties of the steep acclivity. At length, though not without often stopping to breathe and rest, they reached the fallen pile of the ancient wall of the camp. Here both seated themselves, to recover their strength, in profound silence. They had mounted by means of a path that conducted them towards that extremity of the mountain which overlooked the valley of our tale.

The sky was covered with fleecy clouds, that dimmed the light of the moon so as to render objects beneath uncertain and dull; though occasionally the mild orb seemed to sail into a little field of blue, shedding all its light below. But these momentary illuminations were too fitful to permit the eye to become accustomed to the change, and ere any saw distinctly, the

driving vapour would again intercept the rays. To this melancholy character of the hour must be added the plaintive sound of a night-breeze, which audibly rustled the cedars.

A heavy respiration from the one of the two, who, by her air and attire, was evidently the superior, was taken by the other as a permission to speak.

"Well! thrice in my life have I mounted this hill at night," she said, "and few of my years could do the deed by the light of the sun—"

"Hist! Ilse. Hearest thou naught uncommon?"

"Naught but mine own voice, which, for so mute a person, is, in sooth, of little wont,—"

"Truly, there is other sound! Come hither to the ruin; I fear we are abroad at a perilous moment!"

As both arose, there was but a minute before their persons were concealed in such a manner as to render it little probable that any but a

very curious eye would remark their presence. It was evident that many footsteps were approaching, and nearly in their direction. Ilse trembled, but her companion, more self-possessed, and better supported by her reason, was as much, or even more, excited by curiosity than by fear. The ruined hut in which they stood was within the cover of the cedars, where a dull light alone penetrated. By means of this light, however, a band of men was seen moving across the camp: they came in pairs, and their march was swift, and nearly noiseless. The glittering of a morion, as it passed beneath some opening in the trees, and the reclining arquebuses, no less than their order, showed them to be warriors.

The line was long, extending to some hundreds of men. They came, in this swift and silent manner, from the direction of the Jaegerthal, and passed away among the melancholy cedars in that of the plain of the Rhine.

When the last of this long and ghost-

like band had disappeared, Ilse appeared to revive.

"In very sooth," she said, "they seem to be men! Do they, too, come to visit the holy hermit?"

"Believe it not. They have gone down by the rear of Duerckheim, and will soon be beyond our wishes or our fears."

"Lady! Of what origin are they, and on what errand do they come?"

This exclamation of old Ilse sufficiently betrayed the nature of her own doubts, though the firmness of her companion's manner proved that, now the armed men were gone, she no longer felt distrust.

"This may, or may not, be a happy omen," she answered musingly. "There was a goodly number, and warriors too, of fair appearance!"

"Thrice have I visited this camp at night, and never before has it been my fate to view its tenants! Thinkest thou they were Romans? —or are they the followers of the Hun?"

"They were living men: but let us not forget our errand."

Without permitting further discourse, the superior of the two then took the way towards the hut of the Hermit. At first her footstep was timid and unassured; for, strengthened as she was by reflection and knowledge, the sudden and sprite-like passage of such a line of warriors across the deserted camp, was, indeed, likely to affect the confidence of one even more bold.

"Rest thy old limbs on this bit of fallen wall, good nurse," said the muffled female, "while I go within. Thou wilt await me here."

"Go, of Heaven's mercy! and speak the holy Anchorite fair. Take what thou canst of comfort and peace for thine own soul, and if there should be a blessing or a relic more than thou needest, remember her who fondled thy infancy, and who, I may say, and say it I do with pride, made thee the woman of virtue and merit thou art."

"God be with thee, and with me!" murmured the female, as she moved slowly away.

The visitor of the Anchorite hesitated at the door of his hut. Encouraged by sounds within, and certain that the holy man was still afoot, by the strong light that shone through the fissures of the wall, she at length summoned resolution to knock.

"Enter, of God's will!" returned a voice from within.

The door opened, and the female stood confronted to the person of the Anchorite. The cloak and hood both fell from the female's head, as by an involuntary weakness of her hands, and each stood gazing long, wistfully, and perhaps in doubt, at the other. The female, more prepared for the interview, was the first to speak.

"Odo!" she said, with melancholy emphasis.

"Ulrike!"

Eye then studied eye, in that eager and painful gaze, with which the memory traces the

changes that time and the passions produce in the human face. In that of Ulrike, however, there was little to be noted but the developement of more mature womanhood, with such a shadowing of thought as deeper reflection and diminished hopes are apt to bring; but, had she not been apprised of the person of him she sought, and had her memory not retained so vivid an impression of the past, it is probable that the wife of Heinrich Frey might not have recognised the features of the gayest and handsomest cavalier of the Palatinate in the sunken but still glowing eye, the grizzled beard, and the worn though bold lineaments of the Anchorite.

"Thou, Odo, — and a penitent!" Ulrike added.

"One of a stricken soul. Thou seest me, sworn to mortifications and sorrow."

"If repentance come at all, let it be welcome. Thou leanest on a rock, and thy soul will be upheld."

"The Recluse made a vague gesture, which

his companion believed to be the usual sign of the cross. She meekly imitated the symbol, and, bowing her head, repeated an *ave*. In all great changes in religions and politics, the spirit of party attaches importance to immaterial things, which, by practice and convention, come to be considered as the evidences of opinion. Thus it is, when revolutions are sudden and violent, that so many mistake their symbols for their substance, and men cast their lives on the hazards of battle, in order to support an empty name, a particular disposition of colours in an ensign, or some idle significations of terms that were never well explained, long after the real merits of the controversy have been lost by the cupidity and falsehood of those entrusted with the public welfare; and thus it is, that here, where all change has been gradual and certain, that the neglect of these trifles has subjected the country to the imputation of inconsistency; because, in attending so much to the substance of their work, it has overlook-

ed so many of those outward signs, which, by being the instruments of excitement in other regions, obtain a value that has no influence among ourselves. The Reformation made early and rude inroads upon the formula of the Romish church. The cross ceases to be a sign in favour with the Protestant; and, after three centuries, it is just beginning to be admitted that this sacred symbol is a more fitting ornament of one of "those silent fingers pointing to the skies," which so touchingly adorn our churches, than the representation of a barn-yard fowl! Had Ulrike been more critical in this sort of distinctions, or had her mind been less occupied with her own sad reflections, she might have thought the movement of the Hermit's hand, when he made the sign alluded to, had such a manner of indecision and doubt, as equally denotes one new in practices of this nature, or one about to abandon any long-established ritual. As it was, however, she noted nothing extraordinary, but silently took the

seat to which the Anchorite pointed, while he placed himself on another.

The earnest, wistful, and half-mournful look of each was renewed. They sat apart, with the torch throwing its light fully upon both.

"Grief hath borne heavily upon thee, Odo," said Ulrike. "Thou art much changed!"

"And innocence and happiness have dealt tenderly by thee! Thou hast well merited this favour, Ulrike."

"Art thou long of this manner of life—or touch I on a subject that may not be treated?"

"I know not that I may refuse to give the world the profit of my lesson—much less can I pretend to mystery with thee."

"I would gladly give thee consolation. Thou knowest there is great comfort in sympathy."

"Thy pity is next to the love of angels—but why speak of this? Thou art in the hut of a Hermit condemned, of his own conscience,

to privation and penitence. Go to thy happy home, and leave me to the solemn duty which I have allotted to be done this night."

As he spoke, the Anchorite folded his head in a mantle of coarse cloth, for he was evidently clad to go abroad, and he groaned.

"Nay, Odo, I quit thee not, in this humour of thy mind. The sight of me hath added to thy grief, and it were uncharitable—more, it were unkind to leave thee thus."

"What wouldst thou, Ulrike?"

"Disburthen thy soul; this life of seclusion hath heaped a load too heavy on thy thoughts. Where hast thou passed the years of thy prime, Odo—what hath brought thee to this condition of bitterness?"

"Hast thou still so much of womanly mercy, as to feel an interest in the fate of an outcast?"

The paleness of Ulrike's cheek was succeeded by a mild glow. It was no sign of tumultuous feeling, but a gentle proof that a

heart like hers never lost the affinities it had once fondly and warmly cherished.

"Can I forget the past?" she answered. "Wert thou not the friend of my youth—nay, wert thou not my betrothed?"

"And dost thou acknowledge those long-cherished ties? Oh Ulrike! with what maddened folly did I throw away a jewel beyond price! But listen, and thou shalt know in what manner God hath avenged himself and thee."

The Burgomaster's wife, though secretly much agitated, sat patiently awaiting, while the Hermit seemed preparing his mind for the revelations he was about to make.

"Thou hast no need to hear aught of my youth," he at length commenced. "Thou well knowest that, an orphan from childhood, of no mean estate, and of noble birth, I entered on life exposed to all the hazards that beset the young and thoughtless. I had most of the generous impulses of one devoid of care, and a

heart that was not needlessly shut against sympathy with the injured, and, I think, I may say one that was not closed against compassion"——

"Thou dost not justice to thyself, Odo! Say that thy hand was open, and thy heart filled with gentleness."

The Anchorite, humbled as he was by penitence and self-devotion, did not hear this opinion, uttered by lips so gentle and so true, without a change of features. His eye lighted, and for a moment it gazed towards his companion with some of its former bright youthful expression. But the change escaped Ulrike, who was occupied with the generous impulse that caused her, thus involuntarily, to vindicate the Hermit to himself.

"It might have been so," the latter resumed, coldly, after a moment of thought; "but in youth, unless watched and wisely directed, our best qualities may become instruments of our fall. I was of violent passions above all;

miserable traces in that unerring index, the countenance, prove how violent!"

Ulrike had no answer to this remark; for she had felt how easy it is for the strong of character to attach the mild, and how common it is for the human heart to set value on qualities that serve to throw its own into relief.

"When I knew thee, Ulrike, the influence of thy gentleness, the interest thou gavest me reason to believe thou felt in my happiness, and the reverence which the young of our sex so readily pay to innocence, and beauty, and faith in thine, served to tame the lion of my reckless temper, and to bring me, for a time, in subjection to thy gentleness."

His companion looked grateful for his praise, but she remained silent.

"The tie between the young and guiltless is one of nature's holiest mysteries! I loved thee, Ulrike, purely, and in perfect faith! The reverence I bear, here in my solitude and

penance, to these signs of sacred character, is not deeper, less tinctured with human passion, or more fervent, than the respect I felt for thy virgin innocence!"

Ulrike trembled, but it was like the leaf quivering at the passage of a breath of air.

"For this I gave thee credit, Odo," she whispered, evidently afraid to trust her voice.

"Thou didst me justice. When thy parents consented to our union, I looked forward to the marriage with blessed hope; for young though I was, I so well understood myself, as to foresee that some spirit, persuasive, good, and yet firm as thine, was necessary to tame me. Woman winds herself about the heart of man by her tenderness, nay, by her very dependence, in a manner to effect that which his pride would refuse to a power more evident."

"And couldst thou feel all this!"

"Ulrike, I felt more, was convinced of more, and dreaded more, than I ever dared avow. But all feelings of pride are now past. What

further shall I say? Thou knowest the manner in which bold spirits began to assail the mysteries and dogmas of the venerable Church that has so long governed Christendom, and that some were so hardy as to anticipate the reasonings and changes of more prudent heads, by rash acts. 'Tis ever thus with young and heated reformers of abuses. Seeing naught but the wrong, they forget the means by which it has been produced, and overlook the sufficient causes which may mitigate, if they do not justify, the evil."

"And this unhappily was thy temper?"

"I deny it not. Young, and without knowledge of the various causes that temper every theory when reduced to practice, I looked eagerly to the end alone."

Though Ulrike longed to extort some apology from the penitent for his own failings, she continued silent. After minutes of thought, the discourse at length proceeded.

"There were some among thy friends, Odo,

who believed the outrage less than the convent reported?"

"They trusted too much to their wishes," said the Anchorite, in a subdued tone. "It is most true, that, heated with wine, and maddened with anger, I did violence, in presence of my armed followers, to those sacred elements which Catholics so reverence. In a moment of inebriated frenzy, I believed the hoarse applause of drunken parasites, and the confusion of a priest, of more account than the just anger of God! I impiously trampled on the host, and sorely hath God since trampled on my spirit!"

"Poor Odo!—That wicked act changed the course of both our lives! And dost thou now adore that Being to whom this great indignity was offered—Hast thy mind returned to the faith of thy youth?"

"'Tis not necessary, in order to feel the burthen of my guilt!" exclaimed the Anchorite, whose eye began to lose the human expres-

sion which had been kindled by communion with this gentle being, in gleamings of a remorse that had been so long fed by habits of morbid devotion. "Is not the Lord of the universe my God? The insult was to him; whether there be error in this or that form of devotion, I was in his temple, at the foot of his altar, in the presence of his spirit—There did I mock his rule, and defy his power; and this for a silly triumph over a terrified monk!"

"Heart-stricken Odo! Where soughtest thou refuge, after the frantic act?"

The Anchorite looked intently at his companion, as if a flood of distressing and touching images were pressing painfully upon his memory. "My first thought was of thee," he said; "the rash blow of my sword was no sooner given, than it seemed suddenly to open an abyss between us. I knew thy gentle piety, and could not, even in that moment of frenzy, deceive myself as to thy decision. When in a place of safety, I wrote the letter which thou

answered, and which answer was so firm and admirable a mixture of holy horror and womanly feeling. When thou renounced me, I became a vagrant on earth, and from that hour to the moment of my return hither, have I been a wanderer. Much influence and heavy fines saved my estates, which the life of a pilgrim and a soldier have greatly augmented, but never till this summer have I felt the courage necessary to revisit the scenes of my youth."

"And whither strayed thou, Odo?"

"I have sought relief in every device of man:—the gaiety and dissipations of capitals—hermitages (for this is but the fourth of which I am the tenant)—arms—and rude hazards by sea. Of late have I much occupied myself in the defence of Rhodes, that unhappy and fallen bulwark of Christendom. But wherever I have dwelt, or in whatever occupation I have sought relief, the recollection of my crime, and of its punishment, pursues me. Ulrike, I am a man of woe!"

"Nay, dear Odo, there is mercy for offenders more heavy than thou. Thou wilt return to thy long-deserted castle, and be at peace."

"And thou, Ulrike! hath my crime caused thee sorrow? Thou, at least, art happy?"

The question caused the wife of Heinrich Frey uneasiness. Her sentiments towards Odo von Ritterstein had partaken of passion, and were still clothed with hues of the imagination; while her attachment to the Burgomaster ran in the smoother channel of duty and habit:—Still time, a high sense of her sex's obligations, and the common bond of Meta, kept her feelings in the subdued state which most fitted her present condition. Had her will been consulted, she would not have touched on this portion of the subject at all; but since it was introduced, she felt the absolute necessity of meeting it with composure.

"I am happy in an honest husband and an affectionate child," she said; "set thy heart at rest on this account—we were not fitted for

each other, Odo; thy birth, alone, offered obstacles we might not properly have overcome."

The Anchorite bowed his head, appearing to respect her reserve. The silence that succeeded was not free from embarrassment. It was relieved by the tones of a bell that came from the hill of Limburg. The Anchorite arose, and all other feeling was evidently lost in a sudden return of that diseased repentance which had so long haunted him, and which, in truth, had more than once gone nigh to unsettle his reason.

"That signal, Ulrike, is for me."

"And dost thou go forth to Limburg at this hour?"

"A humbled penitent. I have made my peace with the Benedictines by means of gold, and I go to struggle for my peace with God. This is the anniversary of my crime, and there will be midnight masses for its expiation."

The wife of Heinrich Frey heard of his intention without surprise, though she regretted the sudden interruption of their interview.

"Odo, thy blessing!" said Ulrike, kneeling.

"Thou ask this mockery of me!" cried the hermit, wildly.—"Go, Ulrike!—leave me with my sins."

The anchorite appeared irresolute for a moment, and then he rushed madly from the hut, leaving the wife of Heinrich Frey still kneeling in its centre.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Mona, thy Druid rites awake the dead!"

ROGERS.

ULRIKE was in the habit of making frequent and earnest appeals to God, and she now prayed fervently, where she knelt. Her attention was recalled to earth, by a violent shaking of a shoulder.

"Ulrike, child!—Frau Frey!" exclaimed the assiduous Ilse.—"Art glued to the ground by necromancy? Why art thou here, and whither hath the holy man sped?"

"Sawest thou Odo von Ritterstein?"

"Whom! Art mad, Frau? I saw none but the blessed Anchorite, who passed me an' he were an angel taking wing for heaven; and though I knelt and beseeched but a look of grace, his soul was too much occupied with its mission to note a sinner. Had I been evil as some that might be named, this slight might give some alarm; but being that I am, I set it down rather to the account of merit than to that of any need. Nay, I saw naught but the Hermit."

"Then didst thou see the unhappy Herr von Ritterstein!"

Ilse stood aghast.

"Have we harboured a wolf in sheep's clothing!" she cried, when the power of speech returned. "Hath the Palatinate knelt, and wept, and prayed at the feet of a sinner, like ourselves—nay, even worse than ourselves, after all! Hath what hath passed for true coin been naught but base metal—our unction, hypocrisy—our hopes, wicked delusions—our holy pride, vanity!"

"Thou sawest Odo von Ritterstein, Ilse," returned Ulrike, rising, "but thou sawest a devout man."

Then giving her arm to the nurse, for of the two the attendant most required assistance, she took the way from the hut. While walking among the fallen walls of the deserted camp, Ulrike endeavoured to bring her companion to consider the character and former sins of the Anchorite with more lenity. The task was not easy, for Ilse had been accustomed to think the truant Odo altogether abandoned of God, and opinions that have been pertinaciously maintained for twenty years, are not gotten rid of in a moment. Still there is a process by which the human mind can be made to do more than justice, when prejudice is finally eradicated. It is by this species of reaction, that we see the same individuals now reprobated as monsters, and now admired as heroes; the common sentiment as rarely doing strict justice in excessive applause as in excessive condemnation.

We do not mean to say, however, that the sentiment of Ilse towards the Anchorite underwent this violent revulsion from detestation to reverence; for the utmost that Ulrike could obtain in his favour, was an admission that he was a sinner in whose behalf all devout Christians might without any manifest impropriety occasionally say an *ave*. This small concession of Ilse sufficiently favoured the wishes of her mistress, which were to follow the Hermit to the abbey church, to kneel at its altars, and to mingle her prayers with those of the penitent, on this the anniversary of his crime, for pardon and peace. We pretend not to show by what chord of human infirmity the wife of Heinrich Frey was led into the indulgence of a sympathy so delicate, with one to whom her hand had formerly been plighted; for we are not acting here in the capacity of censors of female propriety, but as those who endeavour to expose the workings of the heart, be they for good or be they for evil. It is sufficient for our object,

that the result of the whole picture shall be a lesson favourable to virtue and truth.

So soon as Ulrike found she could lead her companion in the way she wished, without incurring the risk of listening to stale morals dealt out with a profuse garrulity, she took the path directly towards the convent. As the reader has most probably perused our Introduction, there is no necessity of saying more than that Ulrike and her attendant proceeded by the route we ourselves took in going from one mountain to the other. But the progress of Ilse was far slower than that described as our own, in ascending to the Heidenmauer under the guidance of Christian Kinzel. The descent itself was long and slow, for one of her infirmities and years, and the ascent far more tedious and painful. During the latter, even Ulrike was glad to halt often, to recover breath, though they went up by the horse-path over which they had ridden in the morning.

The character of the night had not changed·

The moon appeared to wade among fleecy clouds as before, and the light was misty but sufficient to render the path distinct. At this hour, the pile of the convent loomed against the sky, with its dark Gothic walls and towers, resembling a work of giants, in which those who had reared the structure were reposing from their labours. Accustomed as she was to worship at its altars, Ulrike did not now approach the gate without a sentiment of admiration. She raised her eyes to the closed portal, to the long ranges of dark and sweeping walls, and everywhere she met evidences of midnight tranquillity. There was a faint glow upon the side of the narrow, giddy tower, that contained the bells, and which flanked the gate, and she knew that it came from a lamp that burnt before the image of the Virgin in the court. This gave no sign that even the porter was awake. She stepped, however, to the wicket, and rang the night-bell. The grating of bolts quickly announced the presence of one within.

"Who cometh to Limburg at this hour?" demanded the porter, holding the wicket chained, as if distrusting treachery.

"A penitent, to pray."

The tones of the voice assured the keeper of the gate, who had means also of examining the stranger with the eye, and he so far opened the wicket as to permit the form of Ulrike to be distinctly seen.

"It is not usual to admit thy sex within these holy walls, after the morning mass hath been said, and the confessionals are empty."

"There are occasions on which the rule may be broken, and the solemn ceremony of to-night is one."

"I know not that.—Our reverend Abbot is severe in the observance of all decencies,—"

"Nay, I am one closely allied to him in whose behalf this service is given," said Ulrike, hastily.—"Repel me not, for the love of God!"

"Art thou of his kin and blood?"

"Not of that tie," she answered, in the

checked manner of one who felt her own precipitation, " but bound to his hopes by the near interests of affection and sympathy."

She paused, for at that instant the form of the Anchorite filled the space beside the porter. He had been kneeling before the image of a crucifix hard by, and had been called from his prayers by the soft appeal that betrayed Ulrike's interest in him, every tone of which went to his heart.

" She is mine," he said, authoritatively;— " she and her attendant are both mine.—Let them enter!"

Ulrike hesitated—she scarce knew why,—and Ilse, wearied with her efforts, and impatient to be at rest, was obliged to impel her forward. The Hermit, as if suddenly recalled to the duty on which he had come to the convent, turned and glided away. The porter, who had received his instructions relative to him for whom the mass was to be said, offered no further obstacle, but permitted Ilse to conduct her mis-

tress within. No sooner were the females in the court, than he closed and barred the wicket.

Ulrike hesitated no longer, though she trembled in every limb. Dragging the loitering Ilse after her, with difficulty, she took the way directly towards the door of the chapel. With the exception of the porter at the wicket, and the lamp before the Virgin, all seemed as dim and still within as it had been without the abbey-walls. Not even a sentinel of Duke Friedrich's men-at-arms was visible; but this occasioned no surprise, as these troops were known to keep as much aloof from the more religious part of the tenants of Limburg, as was possible. The spacious buildings, in the rear of the Abbot's dwelling, might well have lodged double their number, and in these it was probable they were now housed. As for the monks, the lateness of the hour, and the nature of the approaching service, fully accounted for their absence.

The door of the abbey-church was always open. This usage is nearly common to every

catholic place of worship in towns of any size, and it contains an affecting appeal to the passenger, to remember the Being in whose honour the temple has been raised. The custom is, in general, turned to account equally by the pious and the inquisitive, the amateur of the arts, and the worshipper of God; and it is to be regretted that the former, more especially when they belong to a different persuasion or sect, should not oftener remember, that their taste becomes bad, when it is indulged at the expense of that reverence which should mark all the conduct of man in the immediate presence of his Creator. On the present occasion, however, there were none present to treat either the altar or its worship with levity. When Ulrike and Ilse entered the chapel, the candles of the great altar were lighted, and the lamps of the choir threw a gloomy illumination on its sombre architecture. The fretted and painted vault above, the carved oak of the stalls, the images of the altar, and the grave and kneeling warriors in stone,

that decorated the tombs, stood out prominent in the relief of their own deep shadows.

If it be desirable to quicken devotion by physical auxiliaries, surely all that was necessary to reduce the mind to deep and contemplative awe existed here. The officials of the altar swept past the gorgeous and consecrated structure, in their robes of duty; grave, expectant monks were in their stalls, and Boniface himself sat on his throne, mitred and clad in vestments of embroidery. It is possible that an inquisitive and hostile eye might have detected in some weary countenance or heavy eyelid, longings for the pillow, and little sympathy in the offices; but there were others who entered on their duties with zeal and conviction. Among the last was Father Arnolph, whose pale features and thoughtful eye were seen in his stall, where he sat regarding the preparations with the tranquil patience of one accustomed to seek his happiness in the duties of his vow. To him might be put in contrast the unquiet organs

and severe, rather than mortified, lineaments of Father Johan, who glanced hurriedly from the altar, and its rich decorations, to the spot where the Anchorite knelt, as if to calculate to what degree of humiliation and bitterness it were possible to reduce the bruised spirit of the penitent.

Odo of Ritterstein, for there no longer remains a reason for refusing to the Anchorite his proper appellation, had placed himself near the railing at the foot of the choir, on his knees, where he continued with his eyes fixed on the golden vessel that contained the consecrated host he had once outraged—the offence which he had now come, as much as in him lay, to expiate. The light fell but faintly on his form, but it served to render every furrow that grief and passion had drawn athwart his features more evident. Ulrike studied his countenance, seen as it was in circumstances of so little flattery; and, trembling, she knelt by the side of Ilse, on the other side of the little gate that

served to communicate between the body of the church and the choir. Just as she had assumed this posture, Gottlob stole from among the pillars, and knelt in the distance, on the flags of the great aisle. He had come to the mass as a ceremony refused to none.

So strong was the light round the altar, and so obscure the aisles below, that it was with difficulty Bonifacius could assure himself of the presence of him in whose behalf this office was had. But when, by contracting his heavy front, so as to form a sort of screen of his shaggy brows, he was enabled to distinguish the form of Odo, he seemed satisfied, and motioned for the worship to proceed.

There is little need to repeat the details of a ceremony it has been our office already to relate in these pages; but as the music and other services had place in the quiet and calm of midnight, they were doubly touching and solemn. There was the same power of the single voice as in the morning, or rather on the preceding day,

for the turn of the night was now passed, and the same startling effect was produced, even on those who were accustomed to its thrilling and superhuman melody. As the mass proceeded, the groans of the Anchorite became so audible, that, at times, these throes of sorrow threatened to interrupt the ceremonies. The heart of Ulrike responded to each sigh that escaped the bosom of Odo, and, ere the first prayers were ended, her face was bathed in tears.

The examination of the different countenances of the brotherhood, during this scene, would have been a study worthy of a deep inquirer into the varieties of human character, or of those who love to trace the various forms in which the same causes work on different tempers. Each groan of the Anchorite lighted the glowing features of Father Johan with a species of holy delight, as if he triumphed in the power of the offices; and, at each minute, his head was bent inquiringly in the direction of the railing, while his ear listened eagerly for

the smallest sound that might favour his desires. On the other hand, the workings of the Prior's features were those of sorrow and sympathy. Every sigh that reached him awakened a feeling of pity—blended with pious joy, it is true—but a pity that was deep, distinct, and human. Bonifacius listened like one in authority, coldly, and with little concern in what passed, beyond that which was attached to a proper observance of the ritual; and from time to time he bent his head on his hand, while he evidently pondered on things that had little connexion with what was passing before his eyes. Others of the fraternity manifested more or less of devotion, according to their several characters, and a few found means to obtain portions of sleep, as the rites admitted of the indulgence.

In this manner did the community of Limburg pass the first hours of the day, or rather of the morning, that succeeded the sabbath of this tale. It may have been, afterwards, source

of consolation to those among them that were most zealous in the observance of their vows, that they were thus passed; for events were near that had a lasting influence not only on their own destinies, but on those of the very region in which they dwelt.

The strains of the last hymn were rising into the vault above the choir, when, amid the calm that exquisite voice never failed to produce, there came a low rushing sound, which might have been taken for the murmuring of wind, or for the suppressed hum of a hundred voices. When it was first heard, stealing among the ribbed arches of the chapel, the cow-herd arose from his knees, and disappeared in the gloomy depths of the church. The monks turned their heads, as by a general impulse, to listen, but the common action was as quickly succeeded by grave attention to the rites. Bonifacius, indeed, seemed uneasy, though it was like a man who scarce knew why. His grey eyes roamed over the body of darkness that reigned among the

distant columns of the church, and then they settled, with vacancy, on the gorgeous vessels of the altar. The hymn continued, and its soothing power appeared to quiet every mind, when the sounds of tumult at the great gate of the outer wall became too audible and distinct to admit of doubt. The whole brotherhood arose as a man, and the voice of the singer was mute. Ulrike clasped her hands in agony, while even Odo of Ritterstein forgot his grief, in the rude nature of the interruption.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason."
Twelfth Night.

It is scarcely necessary to explain, that the man who had accompanied Ulrike and Ilse to the gate of Duerckheim, was Heinrich Frey. No sooner had his wife disappeared, and his short conference with the men on watch was ended, than the Burgomaster hurried towards that quarter of the town which lay nearest to the entrance of the Jaegerthal. Here he found collected a band of a hundred burghers, chosen from among their townsmen for resolution and

physical force. They were all equipped, according to the fashion of the times, with such weapons of offence as suited their several habits and experience. We might also add, that, as each good man, on going forth on the present occasion, had seen fit to consult his bosom's partner, there was more than the usual display of headpieces, and breastplates, and bucklers.

When with his followers, and assured of their exactitude and numbers, the Burgomaster, who was a man nowise deficient in courage, ordered the postern to be opened, and issued first himself into the field. The townsmen succeeded in their allotted order, observing the most profound silence. Instead of taking the direct road to the gorge, Heinrich crossed the rivulet, by a private bridge, pursuing a footpath that led him up the ascent of the most advanced of the mountains, on that side of the valley. The reader will understand, that this movement placed the party on the hill which lay directly opposite to that of the Heiden-

mauer. At the period of the tale, cedars grew on the two mountains alike, and the townsmen, of course, had the advantage of being concealed from observation. A half-hour was necessary to effect this lodgment, with sufficient caution and secrecy; but once made, the whole band seemed to consider itself beyond the danger of discovery. The men then continued the march with less attention to order and silence, and even their leaders began to indulge in discourse. Their conversation was, however, guarded, like that of those who felt they were engaged in an enterprise of hazard.

"'Tis said, neighbour Dietrich," commenced the Burgomaster, speaking to a sturdy smith, who acted on this occasion as lieutenant to the commander-in-chief, an honour that was chiefly due to the power of his arm, and who, emboldened by his temporary rank, had advanced nearly to Heinrich's side, "'Tis said, neighbour Dietrich, that these Benedictines are like bees, who never go forth but in the season of

plenty, and rarely return without rich contribution to their hive. Thou art a reflecting and solid townsman; one that is little moved by the light opinions of the idle, and a burgher that knoweth his own rights, which is as much as to say, his own interests, and one that well understandeth the necessity of preserving all of our venerable usages and laws, at least in such matters as touch the permanency of the welfare of those that may lay claim to have a welfare. I speak not now of the varlets who belong, as it were, neither to heaven nor earth, being condemned of both to the misery of houseless and irresponsible knaves; but of men of substance, that, like thee and thy craft, pay scot and lot, keep bed and board, and are otherwise to be marked for their usefulness and natural rights;—and this brings me to my point, which is neither more nor less than to say, that God hath created all men equal, and therefore it is our right, no less than our duty, to see that Duerckheim is not wronged, especially in that

part of her interests that belong, in particularity, to her substantial inhabitants. Do I say that which is reasonable, or do I deceive both myself and thee, friend smith?"

Heinrich had a reputation for eloquence and logic, especially among his own partisans, and his appeal was now made to one who was little likely to refuse him any honour. Dietrich was one of those animal philosophers who seem specially qualified by nature, to sustain a parliamentary leader, possessing a good organ, with but an indifferent intellect to derange its action. His mind had precisely the description of vacuum which is so necessary to produce a good political or moral echo, more particularly when the proposition is false; for the smallest addition to his capacity might have had such an effect on his replies, as a sounding-board is known to possess in defeating the repetitions of the voice.

"By Saint Benedict, Master Heinrich," he answered, "for it is permitted to invoke the saint

though we so little honour his monks, it were well for Duke Friedrich had he less wine in his Heidelberg tuns, and more of your wisdom in his councils! What you have just proclaimed, is no other than what I have myself thought these many years, though never able to hammer down an idea into speech so polished and cutting as this of your worship! Let them that deny what I say, take up their weapons, and I will repose on my sledge as on an argument not to be answered. We must, in sooth, see Duerckheim righted, and more is the need, since there is this equality between all men, as hath just been so well said."

"Nay, this matter of equality is one much spoken of, but as little understood. Look you, good Dietrich; give me thy ear for a few minutes, and thou shalt get an insight into its justice. Here are we of the small towns born with all the properties and wants of those in your large capitals—are we not men to need our privileges—or are we not human, that air

is unnecessary for breath?—I think thou wilt not gainsay either of these truths."

"He that would do it, is little better than an ass!"

"This being established, therefore, naught remains but to show the conclusion. We, having the same rights as the largest towns in the empire, should be permitted to enjoy them; else is language little better than mockery, and a municipal privilege of no more value than a serf's oath."

"This is so clear, I marvel any should deny it! And what say they of the villages, Master Burgomaster? Will they, think you, sustain us in this holy cause?"

"Nay, I touch not on the villages, good smith, since they have neither burgomasters nor burghers; and where there is so little to sustain a cause, of what matter is resistance? I speak chiefly of ourselves, and of towns having means, which is a case so clear, that it were manifest weakness to confound it with

any other. He that hath right of his side were a fool to enter into league with any of doubtful franchises. All have their natural and holy advantages, but those are the best which are most clear by their riches and force."

"I pray you, worshipful Heinrich, grant me but a single favour, an' you love me so much as a hair?"

"Name thy will, smith."

"That I may speak of this among the townsmen?—such wisdom, and conclusions so evident, should not be cast to the winds!"

"Thou knowest I do not discourse for vain applause.—"

"By my father's bones! I will touch upon it with discretion, most honourable Burgomaster, and not as one of vain speech—your honour knows the difference between a mere street babbler and one that hath a shop."

"Have it as thou wilt; but I take not the merit of originality, for there are many good

and substantial citizens, and some statesmen, who think much in this manner."

"Well, it is happy that God hath not gifted all alike, else might there have been great and unreasonable equality, and some would have arrived to honours they were little able to bear. But having so clearly explained your most excellent motives, worshipful Heinrich, wilt condescend to lighten the march by an application of its truth to the enterprise on which we go forth?"

"That may be done readily, for no tower in the Palatinate is more obvious. Here is Limburg, and yon is Duerckheim; rival communities, as it were, in interests and hopes, and of necessity but little disposed to do each other favour. Nature, which is a great master in all questions of right and wrong, sayeth, that Duerckheim shall not harm Limburg, nor Limburg Duerckheim. Is this clear?"

"Himmel! as the flame of a furnace, honourable Burgomaster."

" Now, it being thus settled, that there shall be no interference in each other's concerns, we yield to necessity, and go forth armed, in order to prevent Limburg doing wrong to a principle that all just men admit to be inviolable. You perceive the nicety; we confess that what we do is weak in argument, and the greater need it should be strong in execution. We are no madcaps, to unsettle a principle to gain our ends, but then, all must have heed to their interests — and what we do is with a reserve of doctrine."

" This relieves my soul from a mountain!" exclaimed the smith, who had listened with the sort of earnestness that denotes honesty of purpose; " naught can be more just, and woe to him that shall gainsay it, while back of mine carries harness!"

In this manner did Heinrich and his lieutenant lighten the way by subtle discourse, and by arguments that, we feel some consciousness, may subject us to the imputation of plagiar-

isms, but for which we can vouch as genuine, on the authority of Christian Kinzel, already so often named.

The high and disinterested intellect that is active in regulating the interests of the world, has been so often alluded to in other places, and on different occasions, that it is quite useless to expatiate on it here. We have already said, that Heinrich Frey was a stout friend of the conservative principle, which, reduced to practice, means little more than that,

> "They shall get who have the power,
> And they shall keep, who can."

Justice, like liberality, has great reservations, and perhaps there are few countries, in the present advanced condition of the human species, that does not daily employ some philosophy of the same involved character as this of Heinrich, supported by reasoning as lucid, irresistible, and nervous.

The direction in which the band of Duerckheimers proceeded, led them, by a tortuous

way, it true, but, surely, to the side of the valley on which the castle of Hartenburg stood. Heinrich, however, brought his followers to a halt, long before they had made the circuit which would have been necessary to reach the hold of Count Emich. The place he chose for the collection and review of the band, was about midway between Duerckheim and the castle, pursuing a line that conformed to the sinuosities and variations of the foot of the mountain. It was in an open grove, where the shadows of the trees effectually concealed the presence of the unusual company. Here refreshments were taken by all, for the good people of the town were much addicted to practices of this consolatory nature, and the occasion must have been doubly urgent that could induce them to overlook the calls of the appetite.

"Seest thou aught of our allies, honest smith?" demanded Heinrich of his lieutenant, who had been sent a short distance along the

brow of the hill to reconnoitre. "It were unseemly in men so trained as our friends, to be lacking at need?"

"Doubt them not, master Heinrich. I know the knaves well; they merely tarry to lighten their packs by the way, in consumptions like this of our own. Dost see the manner in which the Benedictines affect tranquillity, worshipful Burgomaster?"

"'Tis their usual ghostly hypocrisy, brave Dietrich; but we shall uncloak them. Good will come of our enterprise, for, of a truth, by this spirit on our part, which shall for ever demonstrate the necessity of not meddling in the concerns of a neighbour, we settle all uncertainties between us. By the Kings of Koeln! is it to be tolerated that a gownsman shall hoodwink a townsman to the day of judgment? Is there not a light in the abbey chapel?"

"The reverend fathers pray against their enemies. Dost think, worshipful Burgomaster, that the tale concerning the manner in which

those heavy stones were carried upon Limburg Hill has received small additions by oft telling?"

"It may be thus, Dietrich, for naught, unless it may be damp snow, gaineth more by repeated rolling than your story."

"And gold," rejoined the smith, chuckling in a manner not to displease his superior, since it palpably intimated the idea he entertained of the Burgomaster's success in accumulating money, an idea that is always pleasant to those who deem prosperity of this nature to be the principal end of life. "Gold, well rolled, increases marvellously! I am of your mind, Master Heinrich; for, to speak truth, I much question whether the Evil Spirit would have troubled himself with so light an affair as carrying the smaller materials a-foot. As to the heavy columns, and the hewn key-stones, with other loads of weight, it was not so much beneath his character, and may be considered as probable. I have never contradicted that part

of the legend, for it hath likelihood to back it, but—ha ! here cometh the succour."

The approach of a band of men, who came from the direction of Hartenburg, always keeping along the margin of the hills, and within the shadows, absorbed all attention. This second party was treble the force of the townsmen; like them it was armed, and, like them, it showed every sign of military preparation. When it had halted, which it did at a little distance from the band of Heinrich, as if it were not deemed advisable to blend the two bodies in one, a warrior advanced to the spot where the Burgomaster had taken post. The new-comer was well but lightly armed, wearing head-piece and harness, and carrying his sword at rest.

" Who leadeth the Duerckheimers ?" he demanded, when near enough to trust his voice.

" Their poor Burgomaster, in person ; would there had been a better for the duty !"

" Welcome, worshipful sir," said the other,

bowing with more than usual respect. "In my turn, I come at the head of Count Emich's followers."

"How art thou styled, brave captain?"

"'Tis a name but little worthy to be classed with yours, Herr Frey; but, such as it is, I disown it not. I am Berchthold Hintermayer."

"Umph!—a young leader for so grave an enterprise! I had hoped for the honour of thy lord's company."

"I am commanded to explain this matter to your worship." Berchthold then walked aside with the Burgomaster, while Dietrich proceeded to take a nearer view of the allied force.

It is well known to most of our readers, that every baron of note, at the time of which we write, entertained more or fewer dependents, who, succeeding to the regularly banded vassals of the earlier ages, held a sort of middle station between the servitor and the soldier. There stands a noble ruin, called Pierrefont, within a day's ride of Paris, and on the very verge of a

royal forest, a forest that in some of its features approaches nearer to an American wood than any we have yet met in the other hemisphere, which castle of Pierrefont is known to have been the hold of one of these warlike nobles, who did many and manifest wrongs to the lieges of the king, even in an age considerably later than this of our tale. In short, European society, just then, was in the state of transition, beginning to reject the trammels of feudalism, and struggling to wear its bonds, at least in a new and less troublesome form. But the importance and political authority of the Counts of Leiningen, fully entitled them to preserve a train, that barons of lesser note were beginning to abandon, and consequently all of their castles had many of these loose followers, who have since been entirely superseded by the regularly embodied and trained troops of our own time.

The smith found much to approve, and something to censure, in the party that Berchthold had led to their support. So far as recklessness

of character and object, audacity in acts, and indifference to moral checks, were concerned, a better troop could not have been desired, for more than half of them were men who lived by the excesses of the community, occupying exactly that position in the social scale that fungi do in the vegetable, or that sores and blotches fill in the physical economy of the species. But in respect to thewes and sinews, a primary consideration with the smith in estimating the value of every man he saw, they were much inferior, as a body, to the townsmen, in whom orderly living, gainful and regular industry, had permitted the animal to become developed. There was, however, a band of peasants, drawn from among the mountains, or inhabitants of the hamlet beneath the castle walls, who, though less menacing in air, and bold of speech, were youths that Dietrich thought only required the Duerckheim training to become heroes.

When Heinrich and Berchthold rejoined

their respective followers, after the private discourse, all discontent was banished from the former's brow, and both immediately occupied themselves in making the dispositions necessary to the success of the common enterprise. The wood, in which they had halted, lay directly opposite to the inner extremity of the abbey hill, from which it was separated by a broad and perfectly even meadow. The distance, though not great, was sufficient to render it probable that the approach of the invaders would be seen by some of the sentinels, who, there was little doubt, the men-at-arms, lent by the Elector to the monks, maintained, were it only for their own security. Limburg was not a fortress, its impunity being due altogether to the moral power that the Church to which it belonged still wielded, though it were so much weakened in that part of Germany; but its walls were high and solid, its towers numerous, its edifices massive, and all was so disposed that a body within, resolutely bent on resistance,

might well have set at defiance a force like that which now came against it.

Of all these truths Heinrich was sensible, for he had shown courage and gained experience in the defence of places, during a life that was now past its meridian, and which had been necessarily spent amid the tumults and contentions of that troubled age. He looked about him, therefore, with greater seriousness, in order to ascertain on whom he might rely, and the fine and collected deportment of Berchthold Hintermayer gave him that sort of satisfaction which brave men feel by communion with kindred spirits in the moment of danger. When every necessary disposition was made, the party advanced, moving deliberately to preserve their order, and conscious that breath would be necessary in mounting the steep acclivity.

Perhaps there is no time in which the ingenuity of man is more active, than in those moments when he has a sensitive consciousness of being wrong, and consequently a feverish

desire to vindicate his words or acts to himself, as well as to others. A deep conviction of truth, and the certainty of being right, fortifies the mind with a high moral dignity, that even disinclines it to the humility of vindication. Thus he who rushes from a dispute in which his own convictions cause him to distrust his own arguments, into rash and general asseverations, betrays the goadings of conscience rather than spirit, and weakens the very cause that it may be his wish to establish. An arrogant assumption of knowledge, especially in matters that our previous habits and education rather disqualify than teach us to comprehend, can only lead to contradiction and detection; and although circumstances may lend a momentary and fallacious support to error, the triumph of truth is as certain as its punishments are severe. Happily, this is an age, in which no sophistry can long escape unscathed, nor any injury to natural justice go long unrequited. No matter where the wrong to truth has been committed—

on the throne or in the cabinet, in the senate or by means of the press—society is certain to avenge itself for the deceptions of which it has been the dupe, and its final judgments are recorded on that opinion which lasts long after the specious triumphs of the plausible are forgotten. It were well that they who abuse their situations, by a reckless disregard of consequences, in order to obtain a momentary object, oftener remembered this fact, for they would spare themselves the mortification, and in some cases the infamy, that is so sure to rest on him who disregards right to attain an end.

Heinrich Frey greatly distrusted the lawfulness of the enterprise in which he was engaged; for, unlike his companions, he had the responsibility of advising, as well as that of execution, on his head. He had, therefore, a restless wish to find reasons of justification for what he did; and as he marched slowly across the meadows, with Berchthold and the smith at his side, his tongue gave utterance to his thoughts.

"There cannot be any manner of doubt of the necessity and justice of what we do to Limburg, Master Hintermayer," he said; "for men usually affirm in all dubious cases with a confidence precisely in an inverse ratio to the distrust they feel of the rectitude of their cause:—else why are we here? Is Limburg for ever to trouble the valley and the plain with its accursed exactions and avarice, or are we slaves for shaven monks to trample on?"

"There are sufficient reasons, of a truth, for what we do, Herr Burgomaster," answered Berchthold, whose mind had taken a strong bias to the new change in religious opinions, that were then fast gaining ground. "When we have so good motives, let us look no farther."

"Nay, young man, I am certain that the honest smith here will say, no nail that he drives into a hoof can be too well clenched."

"That fact is out of all question, Master Berchthold," answered Dietrich, "and therefore must his worship be right in the whole argument."

"Let it be so; I shall never gainsay the necessity of breaking up a nest of drones."

"I call them not drones, young Berchthold, nor do I come to break them up; but simply to show the world, that he who would deal with the affairs of Duerckheim, hath need of a lesson to teach him not to enter his neighbour's grounds."

"This is wholesome, and will bring great credit on our town!" responded the smith. "The more the pity that we do not press the same matter home upon the Elector too, who hath of late raised new pretensions to our earnings."

"With the Elector the affair may not be discussed, for his interference is of too strong a quality to call upon our manhood in maintaining the right of non-interference. These subtle questions of law are not to be learned over a furnace, but need nice capacities to render them clear; but clear they are,—to all who have the power to understand them. It is more than

probable, that to thee, Dietrich, they are not so manifest; but wert thou once of the town council, thou shouldst look into the question with different eyes."

"That I doubt not, honourable Heinrich, that I doubt not. Could but such an honour light on one of my name and breeding—Himmel! the worshipful council should find a man ready to believe any nicety of this sort, or indeed of any other sort!"

"Ha! There is a light at yonder loop!" exclaimed Berchthold. "This bodes well."

"Hast a friend in the abbey?"

"Go to, Herr Burgomaster—This touches on excommunication;—but I much like yon light at the loop!"

"Let there be silence," whispered Heinrich to those in his rear, who passed the order to their fellows. "We draw near."

The party was now at the foot of the hill. Not a sign of their approach being known had yet met them; unless a single taper placed at a dungeon-loop could thus be interpreted. On

the contrary, the stillness already described in the approach of Ulrike, reigned over the whole of the vast pile. But, neither Heinrich nor his companion liked this fearful quiet, for it boded a defence the more serious when it did come. They would have greatly preferred an open resistance, and nothing would have more relieved the minds of the two leaders, than to have been able to command a rush, under a hot discharge from the arquebusiers of Duke Friedrich. But this relief was refused them, and the whole band reached a point of the hill, under a flanking tower, where it became necessary to abandon all idea of cover, and to make a swift movement to gain the road. It was the rush of this evolution which first disturbed the monks in the chapel. The second interruption proceeded from the ruder sounds of the assault, that immediately after was made upon the outer gate itself.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I 'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself,
And knew no other line."

Coriolanus.

THE assailants, as has been seen, were led by the Burgomaster and his two lieutenants, Berchthold and the smith. Close at the heels of the latter followed three of his own journeymen, each, like his master, armed with a massive sledge. No sooner did the party reach the gate, than these artisans commenced the duty of pioneers, with great readiness and skill. At the third blow from Dietrich's brawny arm,

the gate flew open, and those in front rushed into the court.

"Who art thou?" cried Berchthold seizing a man who knelt with a knee on another's breast, immediately across his passage: "Speak, for this is not a moment of trifling?"

"Master Forester, be less hot, and remember thy friends. Dost not see it is Gottlob, that holdeth the convent porter, lest the knave should use the additional bars. There are strangers within, and, to consult his ease, the faithless varlet hath not done his fastenings properly, else mightest thou have pounded till Duke Friedrich's men were upon thee."

"Bravely done, foster brother! Thy signal was seen and counted on; but, since thou knowest the ways so well, lead on, at once, against the men-at-arms."

"Himmel! The rogues have bristly beards, well grizzled with war, and may not like to have their sleep thus suddenly broken; but service must be done—Choose the most godly

of thy followers, worshipful Burgomaster, to go against the monks, who are fortified in their choir, and well armed with prayer; while I will lead the more carnal to another sort of work against the Elector's people."

While this short dialogue had place, the whole of the assailants poured through the gate, their officers endeavouring to maintain something like order among the ill-trained band. All felt the imperious necessity of first disposing of the troops; for as respects the monks themselves, there was certainly no cause of immediate apprehension. A few were left, therefore, to guard the gate, while Heinrich, guided by the cow-herd, led his followers toward the buildings where the men-at-arms were known to lodge.

If we were to say that the party advanced to this attack without concern, we should overrate their valour, and do the reputation of the Elector's men injustice. There was sacrilege in the invasion of the convent, according to the

predominant opinions of the age; for though protestantism had made great progress, even reformers have grievous doubts in severing the bonds of habit and long-established prejudices. To this lurking sentiment was added the unaccountable silence that still reigned among the men-at-arms, who, as Gottlob had said, were known to be excellent soldiers at need. They lay in the rear of the Abbot's dwelling, and were sufficiently entrenched behind walls, and among the gardens, to make a fierce resistance.

But all these considerations rather flashed upon the minds of the leaders, than they were maturely weighed. In the moment of assault there is little leisure for thought, especially when the affair gets to be as far advanced as this we are now describing. The men rushed towards the point of attack, accordingly, beset by misgivings rather than entertaining any very clear ideas of the dangers they ran.

Gottlob had evidently made the best of the time he had been at liberty in the abbey, to

render himself master of the intricate windings of the different passages. He was soon at the door of the Abbot's abode, which was dashed into splinters by a single blow of Dietrich's sledge, when there poured a stream of reckless, and we may add lawless, soldiery through the empty apartments. In another moment, the whole of the assailants were in the grounds, in the rear of this portion of the dwellings.

As there is nothing that more powerfully rebukes violence than a calm firmness, so is there nothing so appalling to or so likely to repulse an assault, as a coolness that seems to set the onset at defiance. In such moments, the imagination is apt to become more formidable than the missiles of an enemy; conjuring dangers in the place of those which, in the ordinary course of warfare, might be lightly estimated where they seen. Every one knows that the moment which precedes the shock of battle, is by far the most trying to the constancy of man, and a reservation of the means of resist-

ance is prolonging that moment, and of course increasing its influence.

Every man among the hostile band, even to the leaders, felt the influence of this mysterious quiet among the troops of the Elector. So imposing in fact did it become, that they halted in a group, a position of all others most likely to expose them to defeat, and there was a low rumour of mines and ambuscades.

Berchthold perceived that the moment was critical, and that there was imminent danger of defeat.

"Follow!" he cried, waving his sword, and springing towards the silent buildings in which it was known the men-at-arms were quartered. He was valiantly seconded by the Burgomaster and the smith, when the whole party resumed its courage, and advanced tumultuously against the doors and windows. The sounds of the sledges, and the yielding of bars and bolts came next; after which the rush penetrated to the interior. The cries of the assailants rang

among empty vaults. There was the straw, the remnants of food, the odour of past debauches, and all the usual disgusting signs of ill-regulated barracks; for in that day, neatness and method did not descend far below the condition of the affluent; but no cry answered cry, no sword or arquebuse was raised to meet the blow of the invader. Stupor was the first feeling on gaining the knowledge of this important fact. Then Heinrich and Berchthold both issued orders to bring the captured porter, who was in the centre of the assailants, before them.

"Explain this," said the Burgomaster, authoritatively; "what hath become of Duke Friedrich's followers?"

"They departed at the turn of the night, worshipful Herr, leaving Limburg to the care of its patron saint."

"Gone! whither, and in what manner?—If thou deceivest me, knave, thy saint Benedict himself shall not save thee from a flaying!"

"I pray you be not angered, great magistrate, for I say nothing but truth. There came an order from the Elector, as the sun set, recalling his meanest warrior: for, it is said, he is sore pressed, and hath great need of succour."

The silence which followed this explanation, was succeeded by a shout, and individuals began to steal eagerly away from the main body, bent on their own designs of pillage.

"What road took the Duke's men?"

"Worshipful Heinrich, they went down by the horse-path, in great secrecy and order, and passed up the opposite mountain, in order to escape troubling the townsman to open the gates at that late hour. It was their intention to cross the cedars of the Heidenmauer, and, descending on the other side of the camp, to gain the plain in the rear of Duerckheim."

There no longer remained a doubt that the conquest was achieved, and the entire party broke off in bands; some to execute their pri-

vate orders, and others, like those who had already proved delinquent, to look after their own particular interests.

Until this moment not a solitary straggler had gone near the chapel. As it was not the wish of those who had planned the assault, to do personal injury to any of the fraternity, the orders had been so worded, as to leave this portion of the abbey for a time unvisited, in the expectation that the monks would profit by the omission, to escape by some of the many private posterns that communicated with the cloisters. But, as there no longer was an armed enemy to subdue, it now became necessary to think of the fraternity. The process of sacking their dormitories was already far advanced, and the bursts of exultation, that began to issue from the buildings, announced that the rich and commodious dwelling of the Abbot himself was undergoing a similar summary process.

"Himmel!" muttered Gottlob, who from the moment of his liberation had not quitted

the side of his foster-brother, "our castle rogues are taking deep looks into the books of the most reverend Bonifacius, Master Berchthold! It were good to tell them which are Latin, at least, lest they burthen their shoulders with learning they can never use."

"Let the knaves plunder," replied Heinrich, gruffly; "as much evil as good hath come from that store of letters, and it will be all the better for Duerckheim were the damnable ammunition of the Benedictines a little less plenty. There are those on the plains who doubt that necromancy is bound up in some of the volumes that bear a saint's name on their backs."

Perhaps Berchthold might have remonstrated, had not his instinct told him, that remonstrance on such a subject, in that moment of riot and confusion, would have been worse than useless. The consequence was, that valuable works and numerous manuscripts, which had been collected during centuries of learned ease, were abandoned to the humour of men inca-

pable of estimating their value, or even of understanding their objects.

"Let us to the monks," said Heinrich, sheathing his heavy blade, for the first time since they had quitted the wood. "Friend smith, thou wilt look to the duties here, and see that what is done is done thoroughly. Remember that thy metal is well heated, and on the anvil, waiting thy pleasure; it must be beaten flat, lest at another day it be remoulded into a weapon to do us harm. Go to, Dietrich; thou knowest what we of the town would have, and what we expect of thy skill."

Taking Berchthold by the arm, the Burgomaster led the way towards that far-famed pile, the abbey-church. They were followed by a body of some twenty chosen artisans, who, throughout the whole of that eventful night, kept close to the two leaders, like men who had been selected for this particular duty.

The same ominous silence reigned around the chape as had rendered the approach to the

quarters of the men-at-arms imposing. But here the invaders went against a different enemy. With most then living, the mysterious power of the Church still possessed a deep and fearful interest. Dissenters had spoken boldly, and the current of public opinion had begun to set strongly against the Romish Church, in all that region, it is true; but it is not easy to eradicate by the mere efforts of reason, the deep roots that are thrown out by habit and sentiment. At this very hour, we see nearly the entire civilised world committing gross and evident wrongs, and justifying its acts, if we look closely into its philosophy, on a plea little better than that of a sickly taste formed by practices which in themselves cannot be plausibly vindicated. The very vicious effects of every system are quoted as arguments in favour of its continuance; for change is thought to be, and sometimes is, a greater evil than the existing wrong; and men, in millions, are doomed to continue degraded, ignorant, and brutal,

simply because vicious opinions refuse all sympathy with those whose hopeless lot it has been to have fallen, by the adventitious chances of life, beneath the ban of society. In this manner does error beget error, until even philosophy and justice are satisfied with making abortive attempts to palliate a disease that a bolder and better practice might radically cure. It will not occasion surprise, therefore, when we say, that both Heinrich and Berchthold had heavy misgivings concerning the merit of their enterprise, as they drew near the church. Perhaps no man ever much preceded his age, without at moments distrusting his own principles; and it is certain, that Luther himself was often obliged to wrestle with harassing doubts. Berchthold was less troubled, however, than his companion, for he acted under the orders of a superior, and was both younger and better taught than the Burgomaster. The first of these facts was sufficient of itself, under his habits, to remove a load of responsibility from

his shoulders, while the latter not only weakened the influence of previous opinions, but caused those which he had adopted to be well fortified. In short, their existed between Heinrich and Berchthold that sort of difference which all must have remarked in the advancing age in which we live, between him who has inherited his ideas from generations that have passed, and him who obtains them from his contemporaries. The young Forester had grown into manhood since the voice of the Reformer was first heard in Germany, and as it happened to be his lot to dwell among those who listened to the new opinions, he had imbibed most of their motives of dissent, without ever having been much subject to the counteracting influence of an opposite persuasion. It is in this gradual manner, that nearly all salutary moral changes are effected, since they who first entertain them, are rarely able to do more, in their generation, than to check the progress of habit; while the duty of causing the current

to flow backward, and to take a new direction, devolves on their successors.

In believing that Wilhelm of Venloo would be foremost in deserting his post, in this moment of outrage and tumult, the authors of the assault did him injustice. Though little likely to incur the hazards, or to covet the honours of martyrdom, the masculine mind of the Abbot elevated him altogether above the influence of any very abject passion; and if he had not self-command to curtail the appetites, he had a dignity of intellect which rarely deserts the mentally-gifted in situations of difficulty. When Heinrich and Berchthold, therefore, entered the church, they found the entire community in the choir, remaining, like Roman senators, to receive the blow in their collective and official character. There might have been artifice, as well as magnanimity, in the resolution which had decided Bonifacius to adopt this course; for, coming as they did from the scene of brutal violence without, they who entered the church

were much impressed by the quiet solemnity which met them.

The candles still burned before the altar, the lamps threw their flickering light on the quaint architecture and the gorgeous ornaments of the chapels, while every pale face and shaven head beneath, looked like some consecrated watchman, placed near the shrine to protect it from pollution. Each monk was in his stall, with the exception of the Prior and Father Johan, who had stationed themselves on the steps of the altar; the first as the officiating priest of the late mass, and the latter under an impulse of his governing and natural exaggeration, which moved him to throw his person as a shield before the vessel that contained the host. The Abbot was on his throne, motionless, indisposed to yield, and haughty, though with features that betrayed great aud condensed passion.

The Burgomaster and Berchthold advanced into the choir alone, for their followers remained

in the body of the church in obedience to a sign from the former. Both were uncovered, and while they walked slowly up the choir, scarce a head moved. Every eye seemed riveted by a common spell, on the crucifix of precious stones and ivory that stood upon the altar. The blood of Heinrich creeped under the influence of this solemn calm, and by the time he had reached the steps, where he stood confronted equally to the Abbot and the Prior, for the former of whom he had quite as much fear as hatred, and for the latter an unfeigned love and reverence, the resolution of the honest Burgomaster was sensibly weakened.

"Who art thou?" demanded Bonifacius, admirably timing his question, by the indecision and the quailing eye of him he addressed.

"By Saint Benedict! my face is no such stranger in Limburg that you put this question, most holy Abbot," answered Heinrich, making an effort to imitate the other's composure, that was very sensible to himself, but better concealed

from others; "though not shaven and blessed, like a monk, I am one well known to most that dwell in or near Duerckheim!"

"I had better said, '*What* art thou?' Thy name and office are known to me, Heinrich Frey; but in what character dost thou now presume to enter Limburgh church, and to show this want of reverence to our altars?"

"To speak thee fairly, reverend Bonifacius, 'tis in the character of the head-man of Duerckheim, a much-injured and long-abused town, that is tired of monkish exactions and monkish pride, and which hath at length assumed the office of doing itself justice, that I appear. We are here to-night, not as peaceful citizens bent on prayers and hymn-singing, but armed, as thou seest, and bold in the intention to do away a nuisance from the neighbourhood, for ever."

"Thy words are as little friendly as thy guise, and what thou sayest here, but too well answers to that which thy rude followers per-

form beyond the walls of this consecrated spot Hast thou well pondered on this bold step of thy town, Herr Heinrich?"

"If often pondering be well pondering, it hath been before us, Bonifacius, at different meetings, and in various discussions, any time this year past."

"And hast thou no dread of Rome?"

"That is an authority which lessens daily in this region, holy Benedictine. Not to deal doubly by thee, of the two we have most distrusted the anger of Duke Friedrich; but that fear is diminished by the certainty that he hath so much on his hands just now, that his thoughts cannot easily turn to other affairs. We did not know, in sooth, that he recalled his men-at-arms, but had counted on some angry discussion with those obstinate warriors; and thou wilt easily comprehend that their absence hath, in no manner, lessened our faith in our own cause."

"The Elector may regain his power, when a day of reckoning will come for those who have dared to profit by his present distress."

"We are traders and artisans, good Bonifacius, and have made our estimates with some nicety. If the abbey must be paid for—an event by no means certain—we shall count the bargain profitable so long as it cannot be rebuilt. Brother Luther, we think, is laying a corner-stone that will prevent the devil from ever attempting to set up that which we now propose to throw down."

"This is thy final answer, Burgomaster?"

"Nay, I say not that, Abbot. Send in thy terms to the town-council to-morrow, and, if we can entertain them, it may happen that a present accommodation shall stop all future claims. But what has here been so happily commenced, must be as happily finished."

"Then before I quit these holy walls hearken to my malediction," returned Bonifacius, rising

with priestly and practised dignity:—"on thee and on thy town—on all that call thee magistrate—parent——"

"Stay the dreadful words!" cried a piercing female voice from among the columns behind the choir. "Reverend and holy Abbot, have mercy!" added Ulrike, pale, trembling, and shaken equally with horror and alarm, though her eye was bright and wild, like that of one sustained by more than human purpose: "Holy Priest, forbear! He knows not what he does. Madness hath seized on him and on the town. They are but tools in the hands of one more powerful than they."

At the appearance of Ulrike, Bonifacius resumed his seat, disposed to await the effect of her appeal.

"Thou here!" said Heinrich, regarding his wife with surprise, but entirely without anger or suspicion.

"Happily here, to avert this fearful crime from thee and thy household."

"I had thought thee at thy prayers with the poor Herr von Ritterstein, in his comfortless hermitage of the Heidenmauer!"

"And canst thou think of the deed which hath driven the Herr Odo to this penitence and suffering, and stand here armed and desperate! Thou seest that years do not suffice to relieve a soul on which the weight of sacrilege rests; oh! hadst thou been with me, to witness the agony that preyed upon poor Odo, as he knelt at yonder step, listening to the mass that hath this night been said in his behalf, thou mightest better know how deep is the wound made on the heart that hath been seared by God's anger!"

"This is most strange!" rejoined the wondering Burgomaster; "that those whom I had hoped well disposed of, and that in a manner neither to suspect nor to trouble our enterprise, should cross us at the moment when all is so near completion! Sapperment! young Berchthold, thou seest in what manner matrimony

clogs the stoutest of us, though girded with the sword."

"And thou, Berchthold Hintermayer, son of my dearest friend—child of my fondest hope,—thou comest, too, on this unholy errand, like the midnight robber, stealing upon the unarmed and consecrated!"

"None love or none reverence thee, more than I, madam Ulrike," answered the youth, bowing with sincere respect; "but wert thou to address thy speech to the Herr Heinrich, it would go at once to him who directs our movements."

"Then on thee, Burgomaster, will be thrown the heaviest load of Heaven's displeasure, as on the leader of the outrage. What matters it that the Benedictines are grasping, or overweening in their respect for themselves, or that some among them have forgotten their vows? Is not this temple devoted to God? Are not these his altars, before which thou hast dared

to come, with a hostile heart and an angry purpose?"

"Go to, good Ulrike," returned Heinrich, saluting the cold but ever handsome cheek of his wife, who leaned her head on his shoulder to recall her faculties, while she firmly held his hand with both her own, as if to stay his acts; "Go to, thou art excellent in thy way, but what can thy sex know of policy? This matter hath been had up before many councils; and—by my beard! tongue of woman cannot shake the resolutions of Duerckheim. Go, depart with thy nurse, and leave us to do our pleasure."

"Is it thy pleasure, Heinrich, to brave Heaven? Dost thou not know that the crimes of the parent are visited on the child—that the wrong done to-day, however we may triumph in present success, is sure to revisit us in the dread shape of punishment? Were there no other power than conscience, so long as

that fearful scourge remains on earth, 'tis vain to expect immunity. Dost thou owe all to thy Duerckheim council and its selfish policy? Hast thou forgotten the hour that my pious parents gave thee my hand, and the manner in which thou then plighted thy faith to protect me and mine, to assume the place of these departed friends, to be father, and mother, and husband, to her thou took to thy bosom? Is Meta—that child of our mutual esteem—naught, that thou triflest with her peace and hopes? Lay aside, then, these hasty intentions, and turn thy mind to thine own abode; bethink thee of those whom nature and the law condemn to suffer for thy faults, or to whom both have given the dearer right to rejoice in thy clemency and mercy!"

"Was ever woman so bent on crossing the noble duties of man!" said the Burgomaster, who, spite of himself, had been sensibly moved by this hasty and comprehensive picture of his domestic duties, and who was greatly troubled

to find the means of extricating himself from the position in which he stood.—"Thou art better in thy chamber, good Ulrike. Meta will hear of this onset, and have her fears.—Go then, and calm the child; thou shalt have such escort as becometh my quality and thy deserts."

"Berchthold, I make the last appeal to thee. This cruel father, this negligent husband, is too madly bent on his council, and on the wild policy of the town, to remember God! But thou hast young hopes, and sentiments that become thy years and virtue. Dost think, rash boy, that one like Meta will dare trust the last chance of happiness to a participator in this crime, when such an inheritance of guilt will be the portion that shall descend from her own father?"

A stir among the monks, who had hitherto listened with an attention that vacillated between hope and fear, interrupted the answers of the wavering Burgomaster and his young

companion. The movement was caused by the entrance of the group, which, until now, had stood aloof in the obscurity of the great aisle, but which seized the moment of doubt, to advance into the centre of the choir. One, closely muffled, walked from out its centre, and throwing aside the cloak that had concealed his form, showed the armed person of Emich of Leiningen. The moment Ulrike recognised the unbending eye of the Baron, she buried her face in her hands, and quitted the place. She went not unattended, however, for both her husband and Berchthold followed anxiously; nor did either return to the work of the night, until he had seen the heart-stricken wife and mother under the protection of a well-chosen company of the townsmen.

CHAPTER XX.

" He, who the sword of heaven will bear,
Should be as holy as severe—"
Measure for Measure.

THE first glances between Emich and Bonifacius were filled with those passions which each had so long dissembled, and of which the reader has already had glimpses during the more unguarded moments of the recent debauch. In the eyes of the Count, triumph mingled with hatred; while there still remained a slight covering of artifice and caution about the lineaments of the Abbot, masks that he scarcely thought it yet expedient to throw entirely aside.

"We owe this visit, then, to thee, Herr Emich," said the latter, struggling to appear calm.

"And to thine own desert, most holy Bonifacius."

"What wouldst thou, audacious Baron?"

"Peace in this oft violated valley—humility in shaven crowns—religion without hypocrisy—and mine own."

"I will not talk to thee of Heaven, bold man, for the word were blasphemy in such a presence; but thou art not yet so lost to worldly policy as to overlook the punishment of the empire. Hast thou well counted thy gold, and art thou sure thy coffers are sufficiently stored to rebuild the sainted pile which thy hand would fain destroy—or dost think thy riches can replace all that pious princes have here bestowed, during ages in which the Church hath been duly reverenced?"

"As to thy vessels and precious stones, reverend Abbot, it shall be my heed to preserve

them to meet this demand, which haply may never be made; and as to the cost of rebuilding the abbey, why the same notable workman that helped first to set it up, will owe me a good turn for punishing those that outwitted him, and sent him away without the promised boon of souls. Though, God's truth! were the fact fairly dived into, I am of opinion that Limburg, after all, hath sent more customers to his furnaces, than all the drinking-inns and pot-houses of the Palatinate!"

This sally of their lord produced a general and deriding laugh among his followers, who now began to flock into the church from other parts of the abbey, with the expectation that there was rich plunder to be had in the sanctuary. It was about this time, too, that a brand was cast among the straw of the barracks, and the strong light which glared through the stained windows very effectually told the monks of the inefficiency of further remonstrances.

Notwithstanding his known licentiousness, and

the general freedom of his life, the Abbot had imbibed, from the high objects of his calling, by that secret process that renders even the least deserving in some measure subject to the influence of their professions, a cast of dignity, and perhaps we might add even of sincerity (for there is often a strange admixture of inherent faith and practical unbelief about the dissolute), that caused him frequently to rise to the level of his most solemn duties. A character strong and masculine as his, could not be aroused without displaying some of its latent energies, be it for good or be it for evil; and Emich had doubts of the result, when he witnessed the manner in which his enemy succeeded in repressing his fierce resentment, and the expression of clerical dignity and official calmness that reigned in his countenance. The Abbot arose, like a prelate in the undisturbed exercise of his functions, and raising his voice, so as to send his words to the deepest recesses of the chapel, he spoke after the manner of the peculiar rights of the Church he served.

"God, in his hidden wisdom, hath permitted to the wicked a momentary triumph," he said; "we search not now into the reasons of this mysterious dispensation; the truth will be known in his own time:—but, as servitors of the altar —as guardians of this holy sanctuary—as the sworn and professed of Heaven—as one consecrated and blessed—there remaineth a solemn, an imperative duty to perform."

"Bonifacius, beware!" interrupted the Count of Leiningen; "thou dealest not now with burgomasters and weeping wives."

"In the behalf, then, of that God to whom this shrine hath been raised," continued the unmoved Abbot, "in his holy interest, and in his holy name—"

"At thy peril, priest!" and Emich shook, partly in anger, and partly in a terror he could scarce explain.

"As his unworthy but necessary minister—as consecrated and blessed — gifted with the power by the head of the Church, and now required to use it, do I pronounce the—"

"Where are ye, followers of Hartenburg? Down with the silly maledictions of this mad monk; remember ye are not trembling women, to need a Benedictine's blessing!"

The voice of Emich was drowned, as well as that of the Abbot, by the noises that were now raised in the chapel. The first interruption came from a long dark instrument, that was thrust from out of the aisle behind the throne of Bonifacius, and within a few feet of his head; an interruption that filled the whole edifice with the wild, plaintive strains of the mountains.

This signal, which came from the cherry-wood trumpet of Gottlob, who rarely went abroad without this badge of his profession, was immediately followed by a general shout from the band of the Count, and by a variety of similar sounds, that were raised by different instruments that had hitherto been mute. The effect of these shrill strains, echoing among the vaulted and fretted roofs, which were brightly illuminated by the growing and fierce light that now per-

vaded the church, and of the seeming calm of the Abbot, who ended his malediction spite of the uproar, is left to the reader's imagination. When he had finished the unheard curse, Bonifacius looked about him in gloomy observation.

It was evident to his cool and instructed mind, which was far too earthly in its habits to cling to any hopes of a merely spiritual nature, that the outrage had already gone so far, as to render it more hazardous to his enemy to retreat than to advance. Signing to the community, he descended slowly, and with dignity, from his throne, and led the way from the choir. The ready monks obeyed, the fraternity walking from that extraordinary scene, in their customary silent order. Emich followed the dark procession with a troubled eye, for even the conqueror regards the calm retreat of his foes with uneasiness, and there was an instant of painful distrust of his own purpose, as the last flowing robe vanished through a private door that led to a secret postern, by which the routed Benedictines

quitted a mountain where they had so long dwelt, in the calm, and, we might add, in the ease of an affluent and privileged seclusion.

The invaders of the abbey took this open abandonment of the place by its ancient possessors, to be an unequivocal admission of their triumph. There is no moment so likely to produce excesses as that in which the uncertainty of strife is changed to the certainty of victory. The feelings seem willing to avenge themselves for all their previous doubts, and man is ever too ready to ascribe his successes to some inherent qualities, which give him an apparent right to abuse any advantages that may happen to be their consequence. The band of the castle and the people of the town, among whom a large proportion had to the last distrusted the presence of the community, to which vulgar opinion attributed the power of working miracles, no sooner found themselves, as they believed, in undisputed possession of the mountain, than the reaction of feeling, to which there has just been

allusion, urged them to increase their violence, and to redouble those efforts which had momentarily been checked.

A shout of triumph was the common signal for renewing the assault. It was followed by the crashing of windows, and the overthrow of every fixture in the body of the church that was not too solid to resist their first and ill-directed efforts, and a general mutilation of the monuments and laboured statuary. Marble cherubs fell on every side, wings and limbs of angels separated from the trunks, and the grave and bearded visages of many an honoured saint were doomed to endure contumely and fractures. Even the inferior altars were no longer respected, but they and their decorations were ruthlessly scattered, as if the enmity of the conquerors was transferred from those who had administered at them, to the dreaded Being in whose name the rites had been celebrated.

The reader will imagine the confusion and tumult that attended a scene like this. During

the uproar, Emich buried his face in his mantle, and paced to and fro in the choir, which his presence, and perhaps some lingering reverence for the sacred spot, still preserved from violence. He was joined only by the Burgomaster and Berchthold, the remainder of the party having mingled with those who were destroying the chapels and decorations of the church. Heinrich seated himself in one of the vacant stalls, for the recent scene and the subsequent parting with his wife had shaken his resolution, while the young Forester advanced respectfully to the side of his lord.

"Is the Herr Count troubled?" demanded the latter, after a moment of deferential silence.

Emich dropped the cloak, and leaning a hand familiarly on the shoulder of his young servitor, he stood regarding the gorgeous riches and the elaborate beauty of the high altar, all of which was rendered doubly imposing by the powerful light that now illuminated the whole interior of the edifice, which was never more beautiful than

as then seen, with its strong relief and deep shadows.

" Berchthold, there is a God!" he said with emphasis.

" None but the fool doubts it, Herr Emich."

" And he hath his ministers on earth—those whom he hath commissioned to do him pleasure, and to burn his incense."

" We have high authority for this belief, my good Lord."

" We have—the authority is high, that hath so much antiquity—which so suits our secret desires — which descends to us from our fathers."

" And which is so supported by proofs, sacred and profane."

" Thou hast been well schooled, good Berchthold," said the Count, looking earnestly at his companion.

" Heaven left me a pious and tender mother, when it took my father away."

Emich continued to lean on the shoulder of

Berchthold, while his eye, in which sternness of purpose was singularly blended with the waverings of doubt, never turned from its contemplation of the altar. Above the chased and gilded cabinet which contained the host, was a small picture of the Mother of Christ, delineated in those mild and attractive colours with which the pencil is accustomed to pourtray the Virgin wife of Joseph. Her eye seemed to meet the gaze of Emich in sorrow. It was easy to fancy the gentle expression was in reproach of the sacrilege.

"These Benedictines are at length unhoused" —he continued, trying fruitlessly to avert his look from that mild but expressive image; "they have too long ridden roughly on their betters."

Berchthold bowed.

"Dost thou see aught strange, youth, in that image of Maria?"

"'Tis a skilful design, Herr Count, and a fair face to regard."

" Methinks it looks upon this violence with an evil eye !"

" 'Tis but the work of an ingenious man, my Lord, and cannot look other than it hath always seemed."

" Dost think thus, Berchthold? There are many who pretend that images and paintings have been known to speak, when it was Heaven's pleasure."

" They relate such legends, my good Lord, but these are events that are little wont to touch those who are not much disposed to see them."

" And yet in these facts had my fathers faith, and in this belief was I trained !"

Berchthold was mute, his own education having been more suited to the growing opinions of the times.

" That God *can* surpass the ordinary workings of nature, to effect his pleasure," continued Emich, " we may at least believe."

" It may be believed, Herr Count, but is it

necessary? He who made nature may use it at his pleasure."

"Ha! thou hast no faith in miracles, boy!"

"I am myself a miracle, that tells me every moment of the existence of a superior power; and in that much I bend to its control. But it hath never been my fortune to hear an image speak, or see it do aught else that belongs to the will."

"By my father's bones! but thou art fit to deal with the cunningest knave that wears a cowl! How now, brave followers!" turning towards his people; "leave no vestige of the roguery and abominations that have so long been done within these polluted walls!"

"Herr Count!" said Berchthold eagerly, presuming in his haste to touch the cloak of Emich, "here are the Benedictines!"

The word caused the bold, and at that moment the independent Baron to turn suddenly, laying a hand on his sword, as he did so. But the hand released its grasp, and the features of

Emich immediately reverted to their former expression of anxiety and doubt, at what he now beheld.

By this time all of the different edifices which composed the abbey of Limburg were fired, the church and its immediate appendages alone excepted. The consequence was such an increase of light within the latter, as penetrated the most obscure of its Gothic recesses. The choir, above all, received the strongest illumination, and young Berchthold thought its tracery never appeared so beautiful as in that fearful moment of impending destruction. The candles and lamps of the great altar began to look dim, and all around prevailed the glorious and fiery brightness which accompanies a fierce conflagration. During the instant that Emich was turned towards his people, two monks had come from the sacristy, and placed themselves on the steps of the altar. They were the Prior and Father Johan. The former bore a small ivory crucifix, which from time to time he kissed, while the

latter placed at his feet a massive and curiously carved chest, of sufficient size and weight to have required the aid of a lay brother to bring it from its repository.

The countenance of the Prior was mild, persuasive, and filled with holy concern. That of his companion flushed, excited, and bearing the look of feverish fire, which is the effect of an enthusiasm that springs as much from temperament, as from conviction.

Emich looked at the Benedictines uneasily, and he advanced so near, always attended by the forester, as to be within reach of his arm.

"'Fore God, but ye are tardy, Fathers," he said, determined to assume an indifference he was far from feeling; "the pious Bonifacius hath departed many minutes, and quickened, as he is, by love of his person, I make no question that his footsteps have already gone down the mountain side!"

"Thou hast at length yielded to the whispering of the devil, Count of Leiningen!" re-

turned the Prior; "thou art resolute that this blot shall rest upon thy soul!"

"We are not at confession, holy Arnolph, but engaged in a knightly redressing of our rights; if thou hast aught here that is dear to thee, take it, of God's name, and go thy way. Thou shalt have safe conduct, were it to the gates of Rome; for, of all thy fraternity, thou art he for whom I alone feel regret or amity, in this just enterprise."

"I know not this difference in love, when it touches the existence of our shrine, or the duty that ties us to its service. This question is not between thee and me, Lord Emich, but between thee and God!"

"Have it as thou wilt, Herr Prior, so thou dost but depart in peace."

"I am not weak enough to resist when resistance is vain," mildly answered the monk; "nor am I quick to desert my post, while there is hope. Thou hast not well bethought thee of this act, Emich; thou hast not remembered thy

posterity, nor thy kind interest in the noble Ermengarde !"

" Dost fancy me an uxorious citizen, reverend Arnolph, that thou wouldst fain stop a knight in his onset, by speaking of the good wife and her babes ?"

As he concluded, Emich laughed.

" Thou has not well conceived me. This is not a question of death in battle, or of the grief of those who survive; for such thoughts are, unhappily, but too common with those who rule the earth, to raise disquiet; but I would speak to thee of the long future and of its pains. Dost thou know, irreverend Baron, that the God of Israel—who is my God and thine—the God of Israel hath said, that he will visit the sins of the parent upon the descendant, from generation to generation ? and yet, blinded by this specious success, thou seemest to court his anger."

" This may be so or not; for ye of the cloisters have many subtle ways of reasoning as you wish; but to me it appeareth better that each

should suffer for his own sins, and such, I take it, is what the community of Limburg doth now undergo."

"That we have done much evil, and neglected much good, is, alas, too true!"

"By the Kings of Koeln! thou art getting to be of our side, holy Arnolph!"

"For such is the common course," continued the unmoved Prior,—"but that thou art not our judge is equally certain. That each does and will suffer for his own acts is beyond denial, but the fearful consequences of crime do not stop with him who hath committed it. This much is taught us by reason; and what is still more sure, it is consecrated by words from God's own mouth. Ponder, then, whilst thou may, on the load of sorrow thou art heaping on thy descendants: remember that thou now standest there, subject to goading passions, the miserable being thou art, simply that in thy person thou payest the price of a parent's sins. What our common father did, is still avenged on us his children."

"How now! Herr Prior, thou pushest my pedigree much beyond its pretensions. Noble and princely, if thou wilt, but I pass not the dark ages in any of my claims. Let them that have greater ambition, pay for the purchase in the way thou namest; I am content with more modern honours."

Emich spoke jeeringly, but the attentive monk saw that he was troubled.

"If thou hast no thought for posterity—none for thyself—none for thy God, Emich," the latter resumed, "bethink thee of those who have gone before. Hast already forgotten thy visit to the tombs of thy family?"

"Thou hast me there, Arnolph!—those sacred vaults have been thy convent's shield these many months!"

"And thou art now disposed to forget them?"

"If thou wilt ask yon honest men, they will tell thee, Prior, they have no order to spare the meanest of thy marble cherubs, even though it hover over a grave of mine own house."

" Then do I indeed despair of touching thy heart !" answered Father Arnolph, sorrowing as much for the crime as for its consequences. " Then indeed art thou madly and ruthlessly bent, not only on our destruction, but on thine own ; for pity for the child, and love of the parent are equally despised. Emich of Leiningen, I curse thee not — this is a weapon too fearful for human hands lightly to wield.—I bless thee not; duty to God forbids the holy office."

" Hold ! reverend Arnolph, let us not part in anger—I would, in sooth, crave from thy worthy hands some touch of consolation—if—ay — if there be chapel in this church for which thou hast more than usual reverence, let it be named, and I swear, by knight's faith, unless the work be already done, it shall stand unscathed amid the ruins, in testimony of my love for thee—or if thou hast aught here of price, whether of monkish or worldly value, point it out, that it may be held safe for thy better

leisure. In return, I ask but the parting words of peace."

"'Tis forbidden to those who war against God," returned the grieved Prior, releasing his robe from the eager grasp of the Baron.—"I can and will pray for thee, Emich; but to bless thee were treachery to Heaven!"

So saying, the pious Arnolph buried his face in his dress, to shut out the view of the profanation that was working around him, and withdrew slowly from the choir.

CHAPTER XXI.

"Avaunt!
Incarnate Lucifer! 'tis holy ground;
A martyr's ashes now lie there, which make it
A shrine.—"

BYRON.

DURING the foregoing scene, the Benedictine, already known to the reader as Father Johan, had awaited its issue with a species of lofty patience on the steps of the altar. But in a character so exaggerated, there remained little that was purely natural; even the forbearance of the monk partook of the forced and fervid qualities of his mind. Conventual discipline, deep and involuntary respect for the

Prior, and that very disdain which he felt for all gentle means of recalling a sinner to the fold, kept him tolerably tranquil, while Emich and his spiritual superior held their parley; but there was a gleam of wild delight in his eye, when he found, of all that powerful and boasted fraternity, that he alone remained to defend the altars. The feeling of the moment in such a breast, notwithstanding the scene of tumult that rather increased than diminished in the church, was that of triumph. He exulted in his own constancy, and he anticipated the effects which were to follow from his firmness, with the self-complacency of a prurient confidence, and with the settled conviction of an enthusiast.

Emich took little heed of his presence, during the first moments that succeeded the departure of the Prior. There is a majesty, and a quiet energy in truth and sound principles, that happily form their constant buttresses. Without this wise provision of Providence, the world

would be hopelessly abandoned to the machinations of those who consider all means lawful, provided the ends tend to their own success. All near the abbey of Limburg had felt the influence of these high qualities in Father Arnolph, and it is more than probable that, as in the case of the city of Canaan, had the community contained four of his spiritual peers the abbey would not have fallen.

The Count, in particular, who, like all that first break from mental servitude, was so often troubled with strong doubts, had long entertained a deep respect for this monk; and it is not improbable, that had the pious Arnolph fully understood his own power, by an earlier and more vigilant use of his means, he might have found a way to avert the blow that had now alighted on Limburg. But the meekness and modesty of the Prior were qualities as strongly marked as his more active virtues, and the policy of Limburg was not of a character to rely on either for its security.

"There is good in that brother," said Emich to Berchthold, when his thoughtful eye again rose to the face of the young forester.—"Had he been mitred, instead of Bonifacius, our rights might have still suffered."

"Few are more beloved than Father Arnolph, Herr Count, and none so deserve to be."

"Thou art of this mind! How now, Master Heinrich! art in monkish meditation in thy stall, or dost dispose of the lesson of the virtuous Ulrike, more at thy ease, in a seat where so much substantial carnal aliment hath been digested by godly Benedictines! Come to the front, like a stout soldier, and give us the savour of thy good wisdom in this strait."

"Methinks, our work wellnigh done, Lord Emich," answered Heinrich, complying with the request; "my faithful townsmen are not idle in the chapels, and among the tombs, and the sledge of yon smith dealeth with an angel

an' it were a bar of molten iron. Each stroke leaves a mark that no chisel will repair !"

"Let the knaves amuse themselves; every blow is quickened by the recollection of some hard penance. Thou seest that they place the confessionals in a pile ready for the torch ! This is attacking the enemy in his citadel. But Heinrich, is the excellent Ulrike wont to come forth with thee in thy frays against the Church ? God's judgments ! Were Ermengarde of this humour, we should have no hope of salvation in our castle !"

"You do my wife injustice, Herr Count ! Ulrike was here to pray, and not to encourage."

"Thou mightest have spared the explanation, for truly such encouragement never did soldier need ! Wert privy to the visit,—ha—wert privy, worthy Burgomaster ?"

"To speak you honestly, Herr Emich, I thought the woman otherwise bestowed."

"By the Magi !—in her bed ?"

"Nay, at her prayers, but in a different

place. But we do her too much honour, noble Emich, to let the movements of a mere housewife occupy our high thoughts in this busy moment."

"Nothing that touches thee is of light concern with thy friends, good Burgomaster," answered the Baron, who pondered with instinctive uneasiness, even in that moment of tumult, on this visit of Ulrike to the Benedictines, at an hour so unusual. "Thou art well wived, Herr Heinrich, and all that know thy consort do her honour!"

The Burgomaster was a man by far too well satisfied with his own superior merits to harbour jealousy. Self-complacency might have been at the bottom of his security, though it were scarce possible for one even much more addicted by nature to that tormenting passion, to have lived so long in perfect familiarity with the pure mind of Ulrike, without feeling reverance for its principles and virtue. The sentiments of the Baron were very different; for

though in his heart equally convinced of the character of her to whom he alluded, he could not altogether exclude the suspicions of a man of loose habits, nor the uneasiness of one who had himself been discarded. The answer of the husband, however, served to turn the discourse, by giving the Burgomaster an opportunity of placing himself in the most prominent relief.

"A thousand thanks, illustrious Herr," he said, raising his cap; "the woman is not amiss, though much troubled with infirmity on the score of altars and penances. When we shall have fairly disposed of Limburg, another reign will commence among our wives and daughters, and we can hope for more quiet Sabbaths. As to this grace of your present speech, Lord Count, I take it, as it was no doubt meant, to be another pledge of our lasting amity and close alliance."

"Thou takest it well," quickly answered Emich, losing the passing feeling of distrust

in the recollection of his present purpose; "no words of friendship are lost on a true and sworn supporter. Well, Heinrich, is our affair finally achieved?"

"Sapperment! Herr Count, if not finished, it is in a fair way to be so quickly."

"Here remaineth a Benedictine!" said Berchthold, drawing their attention to the monk, who still maintained his post on the steps of the altar.

"The bees do not relish quitting their hive, while any of the hard earnings are left," said the Count, laughing: "What wouldst thou, Father Johan? if thy careful mind hath had thought of the precious vessels, make thy choice and depart."

The Benedictine returned the laugh of the noble, with a smile of deep but quiet exultation.

"Assemble thy followers, rude Baron," he said; "call all within thy control to this sanctified spot, for there yet remaineth a power to

be overcome of which thou hast not taken heed; at the moment when thou fanciest thyself most secure, art thou nearest to disgrace and to destruction."

As the excited monk suited his words by a corresponding energy of emphasis and tone, Emich recoiled a step, like one who distrusted a secret mine. The desperate character of Father Johan's enthusiasm was well known, and neither of the three listeners was without apprehension, that the fraternity, aware of the invasion, had plotted some deep design of vengeance, which this exaggerated brother had been deputed to execute.

"Ho; without there!" cried the Count—"Let a party descend quickly to the crypt, and look to the villanies of these pretended saints: Cousin of Viederbach," revealing in the eagerness of the moment the presence of this sworn soldier of the Cross, "see thou to our safety, for the Rhodian warfare hath made thee familiar with these treacheries."

The call of the Count, which was uttered like a battle-cry, stayed the hands of the destroyers. Some rushed to obey the order, while most of the others gathered hastily into the choir. It is certain that the presence of fellow-sufferers diminishes the force of fear, even though it may in truth increase the danger; for such is the constitution of our minds, that they willingly admit the influence of sympathy, whether it be in pain or pleasure. When Emich found himself backed by so many of his band, he thought less of the apprehended mine, and he turned to question the monk, with more of the calmness that became his condition.

"Thou wouldst have the followers of Hartenburg, Father," he said, ironically, "and thou seest how readily they come!"

"I would that all who have listened to schismatics—all who refuse honour to the holy Church—all who deny Rome—and all that believe themselves on earth freed from the agency of Heaven, now stood before me!" answered the

Benedictine, examining the group of heads that clustered among the stalls, with the bright but steady eye of one engrossed with the consciousness of his force. "Thou art in hundreds, Count of Leningen—would it were God's pleasure that it had been in millions!"

"We are of sufficient strength for our object, monk."

"That remaineth to be seen. Now, listen to a voice from above!—I speak to you, unhallowed ministers of the will of this ambitious Baron—to you, misguided and ignorant tools of a scheme that hath been plotted of evil, and hath been brought forth from the prolific brain of the restless Father of Sin. Ye have come at the heels of your lord, vainly rejoicing in a visible but impotent power—impiously craving the profits of your unholy enterprise, and forgetting God;"—

"By the mass, priest!" interrupted Emich; "thou hast once already given us a sermon to day, and time presseth. If thou hast an enemy

to present, bring him forth; but we tire of these churchly offices."

"Thou hast had thy moment of wanton will, abandoned Emich, and now cometh the judgment—seest thou this box of precious relics!—dost thou forget that Limburg is rich in these holy remains, and that their virtues are yet untried?—Woe to him who scoffeth at their character, and despiseth their power!"

"Stay thy hand, Johan!" cried the Count hastily, when he saw that the monk was about to expose some of those well known vestiges of mortality to which the Church of Rome then, as now, attributed miraculous interventions; "this is no moment for fooleries!"

"Callest thou this sacred office by so profane a name!—abide the issue, foul-mouthed asperser of our holy authority, and triumph if thou canst!"

The Count was much disturbed, for his reason had far less influence now in supporting him than his ambition. The party in the rear, too, began to waver, for opinion was not then suffi-

ciently confirmed to render the mass indifferent to such an exposure of clerical power. Whatever may be the difference that exists between Christian sects concerning the validity of modern miracles, all will allow, that, when trained in the belief of their reality, the mind is less prepared to resist their influence than that of any other engine by which it can be assailed, since it is placing the impotency of man in direct and obvious collision with the power of the Deity. Before such an exhibition of force, nature offers no means of resistance; and the mysterious and unseen agency by which the wonder is produced, enlists in its interest both the imagination and that innate dread of omnipotence which all possess.

"'Twere well this matter went no farther!" said Emich, uneasily whispering his principal agents.

"Nay, my Lord Count," answered Berchthold, calmly, "it may be good to know the right of the matter. If we are not of Heaven's

side in this affair, let it be shown in our own behalf; and if the Benedictines are no better than pretenders, our consciences will be all the easier."

"Thou art presuming, boy—none know the end of this!—Herr Heinrich, thou art silent?"

"What would you have, noble Emich, of a poor Burgomaster! I will own, I think it were more for the advantage of Duerckheim that the matter went no farther."

"Thou hearest, Benedictine!" said the Count, laying the point of his sheathed sword on the richly chased and much reverenced box that the monk had already unlocked,—"this must stop here!"

"Take away the weapon, Emich of Leiningen!" said Father Johan, with dignity.

The Count obeyed, though he scarce knew why.

"This is a fearful instant for the unbeliever," continued the monk; "the moment is near when our altars shall be avenged—nay, recoil not, bold Baron—remain to the end, ye disso-

lute and forsaken followers of the wicked, for in vain ye hope to flee the judgment."

There was so much of tranquil enthusiasm in the air and faith of Father Johan, that, spite of a general wish to be at a distance from the relics, curiosity, and the inherent principles of religious awe held each man spell-bound; though every heart beat quicker as the monk proceeded, calmly, and with a reverential mien, to expose the bones of saints, the remnants of mantles, the reputed nails of the true cross, and morsels of its wood, with divers other similar memorials of holy events, and of sainted martyrs. Not a foot had power to retire. When all were laid, in solemn silence, on the bright and glowing shrine, Father Johan, crossing himself, again turned to the crowd.

"What may be Heaven's purpose in this strait, I know not," he said; "but withered be the hand, and for ever accursed the soul of him who dareth violence to these holy vestiges of Christian faith!"

Uttering these ominous words, the Benedictine faced the crucifix, and kneeled in silent prayer. The minute that followed was one of fearful portent to the cause of the invaders. Eye sought eye in doubt, and one regarded the fretted vault, another gazed intently at the speaking image of Maria, as if each expected some miraculous manifestation of divine displeasure. The issue would have been doubtful, had not the cherry-wood trumpet of the cowherd again sounded most opportunely in his master's behalf. The wily knave blew a well-known and popular imitation of the beasts of his herd, among the arches of the chapel, striking at the effect of what had just passed, by the interposition of a familiar and vulgar idea. The influence of the ludicrous, at moments when the passions vacillate, or the reason totters, is too well known to need elucidation. It is another of those caprices of humanity that baffle theories, proving how very far we are removed from being the exclusively reasoning animal we are fond of thinking the species.

The expedient of the ready-witted Gottlob produced its full effect. The most ignorant of the castle followers, those even whose dull minds had been on the verge of an abject deference to superstition, took courage at the daring of the cow-herd; and, as the least founded in any belief are commonly the most vociferous in its support, this portion of the band echoed the interruption from fifty hoarse throats. Emich felt like a man reprieved; for under the double influence of his own distrust, and the wavering of his followers, the Count for a moment had fancied his long-meditated destruction of the community of Limburg in great danger of being frustrated.

Encouraged by each other's cries, the invaders returned to their work, laughing at their own alarm. The chairs and confessionals had been already heaped in the great aisle, and a brand was thrown into the pile. Fire was applied to the church wherever there was food for the element, and some of the artizans of Duerck-

heim, better instructed than their looser associates, found the means to light the conflagration in such parts of the roofs and the other superior stories, as would insure the destruction of the pile. In the meantime, all the exterior edifices had been burning, and the whole hill, to the eye of him who dwelt in the valley beneath, presented volumes of red flame, or of lurid smoke.

During the progress of this scene, Emich paced the choir, partly exulting in his success, and partly doubting of its personal fruits. Over the temporal consequences he had well pondered; but the motionless attitude of Father Johan, the presence of the long reverenced relics, and the denunciations of the Church, still had their terrors for one whose mind had few well grounded resources to sustain it. From this state of uneasiness he was aroused by the noise of the sledge, at work in the crypt. Followed by Heinrich and Berchthold, the Count hastened to descend to this place, which, it will be remembered, contained the tombs and the chapel

of his race. Here, as above, all was in bright light, and all was in confusion. Most of the princely and noble tombs had already undergone mutilation, and no chapel had been respected. Before that of Hartenburg, however, Albrecht of Veiderbach stood, with folded arms and a thoughtful eye. The cloak which, during the commencement of the attack, had served to conceal his person, was now neglected, and he seemed to forget the prudence of disguise in deep contemplation.

"We have at length got to the monuments of our fathers, cousin;" said the Count, joining him.

"To their very bones, noble Emich!"

"The worthy knights have long slept in evil company; there shall be further rest for them in the chapel of Hartenburg."

"I hope it may be found, Herr Graf, that this adventure is lawful!"

"How!—dost thou doubt, with the work so near accomplished?"

"By the mass! a soldier of Rhodes might

better be fighting your turbaned infidel, than awakening the nobles of his own house from so long a sleep, at so short a summons!"

"Thou canst retire into my hold, Herr Albrecht, if thy arm is wearied," said Emich coldly; "not a malediction can reach thee there."

"That would be poor requital for a free hospitality, cousin; the travelling knight is the ally of the last friend, even though there be some wrong to general duties. But we cavaliers of the island well know, that a retreat, to be honourable, must be orderly, and not out of season. I am with thee, Emich, for the hour, and so no more parley. This was the image of the good bishop of our line?"

"He had some such reverend office, I do believe; but speak of him as thou wilt, none can say he was a Benedictine."

"It had been better, cousin, since this church is to be sacked, that our predecessors had found other consecrated ground for their dust. Well, we sworn soldiers pass uneven lives! It is now

some twelve months or so, that like a loyal and professed Rhodian, I stood to my knees in water, making good a trench against your believer in Houris and your unbeliever in Christ; and now, forsooth, I am here as a spectator (none call me more with honesty), while a Christian altar is overturned, and a brotherhood of shaven monks are sent adrift upon earth, like so many disbanded mercenaries!"

"By the Three Kings! my cousin, thou makest a fit comparison; for like disbanded mercenaries have they gone forth to prey upon society in a new shape.—Spare the angel of my grandfather, good smith," cried Emich, interrupting himself; "if there be any virtue in the image, 'tis for the benefit of our house!"

Dietrich stayed his uplifted arm, and directed the intended blow at another object. The marble flew in vast fragments at each collision with his sledge, and the leaders of the party soon found it necessary to retire, to avoid the random efforts of the heated crowd.

There no longer remained a doubt of the fate of these long-known and much-celebrated conventual buildings. Tomb fell after tomb, monuments were defaced, altars were overturned, chapels sacked, and every object that was in the least likely to resist the action of fire, received such indelible injuries as rendered its restoration difficult or impossible.

During the continuance of their efforts, the conflagration had advanced, as the fierce element that had been called in to assist the destroyers is known to do its work. Most of the dormitories, kitchens, and outer buildings were consumed, so far as the materials allowed, beyond redress, and it became apparent that the great church and its dependencies would soon be untenable.

Emich and his companions were still in the crypt, when a cry reached them, admonishing all within hearing to retreat, lest they become victims to the flames. Berchthold and the smith drove before them the crowd from the crypt, and there was a general rush to gain the outer door.

When the interior of the church was clear, the Count and his followers paused in the court, contemplating the scene with curious eyes, like men satisfied with their work. No sooner was the common attention directed back towards the spot from whence they had just escaped, than a general cry, that partook equally of wonder and horror, broke from the crowd. As the doors were all thrown wide, and every cranny of the building was illuminated by the fierce light of the flames that were raging in the roofs, the choir was nearly as visible to those without, as if it stood exposed to the rays of a noon-day sun. Father Johan was still kneeling before the altar.

In obedience to the commands of Emich, the sacred shrine had been stripped of its precious vessels, but none had presumed to touch a relic. On these long-venerated memorials, the Benedictine kept his eyes riveted, in the firm conviction that, sooner or later, the power of God would be made manifest in defence of his violated temple.

"The monk! the monk!" exclaimed fifty eager voices.

"I could fain save the fanatic!" said Emich, with great and generous concern.

"He may listen to one who beareth this holy emblem," cried the Knight of Rhodes, releasing his cross from the doublet in which it had been concealed. "Will any come with me, to the rescue of this mad Benedictine?"

There was as much of repentant atonement in the offer of Albrecht of Veiderbach, as there was of humanity. But the impulse which led young Berchthold forward, was purely generous. Notwithstanding the imminent peril of the attempt, they darted together into the building, and passed swiftly up the choir. The heat was getting to be oppressive, though the great height of the ceilings still rendered it tolerable. They approached the altar, advising the monk of his danger by their cries.

"Do ye come to be witnesses of Heaven's power?" demanded Father Johan, smiling with

the calm of an inveterate enthusiast; "or do ye come, sore-stricken penitents, that ye have done this deed?"

"Away, good father!" hurriedly answered Berchthold; "Heaven is against the community to-night; in another minute, yon fiery roof will fall."

"Hearest thou the blasphemer, Lord? Is it thy holy will, that"——

"Listen to a sworn soldier of the cross," interrupted Albrecht, showing his Rhodian emblem—"we are of one faith, and we will now depart together for another trial."

"Away! false servant! and thou, abandoned boy!—See ye these sainted relics?"

At a signal from the Knight, Berchthold seized the monk by one side, while Albrecht did the same thing on the other, and he was yet speaking as they bore him down the choir. But they struggled with one that a long-encouraged and morbid view of life had rendered mad. Before they reached the great aisle, the fanatic

had liberated himself, and, while his captors were recovering breath, he was again at the foot of the altar. Instead of kneeling, however, Father Johan now seized the most venerated of the relics, which he held on high, audibly imploring Heaven to hasten the manifestation of its majesty.

"He is doomed!" said Albrecht of Veiderbach, retiring from the church.

As the Knight of Rhodes rushed through the great door, a massive brand fell from the ceiling upon the pavement, scattering its coals like so many twinkling stars.

"Berchthold! Berchthold!" was shouted from a hundred throats.

"Come forth, rash boy!" cried Emich, with a voice in which agony was blended with the roar of the conflagration.

Berchthold seemed spell-bound. He gazed wistfully at the monk, and darted back again towards the altar. An awful crashing above, which resembled the settling of a mountain of

snow about to descend in an avalanche, grated on the ear. The very men who, so short a time before, had come upon the hill ready and prepared to slay, now uttered groans of horror at witnessing the jeopardy of their fellow-creatures; for, whatever we may be in moments of excitement, there are latent sympathies in human nature which too much use may deaden, but which nothing but death can finally extinguish.

"Come forth, young Berchthold! come forth, my gallant forester!" shouted the voice of the Count above the clamour of the crowd, as if rallying his followers with a battle-cry. "He will die with the wretched monk!—The youth is mad!"

Berchthold was struggling with the Benedictine, though none knew what passed between them. There was another crash, and the whole pavement began to glow with fallen brands. Then came a breaking of rafters, and a scattering of fire that denoted the end. The interior of the chapel resembled the burning

shower which usually closes a Roman girandola, and the earth shook with the fall of the massive structure. There are horrors on which few human eyes can bear to dwell. At this moment nearly every hand veiled a face, and every head was averted. But the movement lasted only an instant. When the interior was again seen, it appeared a fiery furnace. The altar still stood, however, and Johan miraculously kept his post on its steps. Berchthold had disappeared. The gesticulations of the Benedictine were wilder than ever, and his countenance was that of a man whose reason had hopelessly departed. He kept his feet only for a moment, but withering fell, after which his body was seen to curl like a green twig that is seared by the flames.

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